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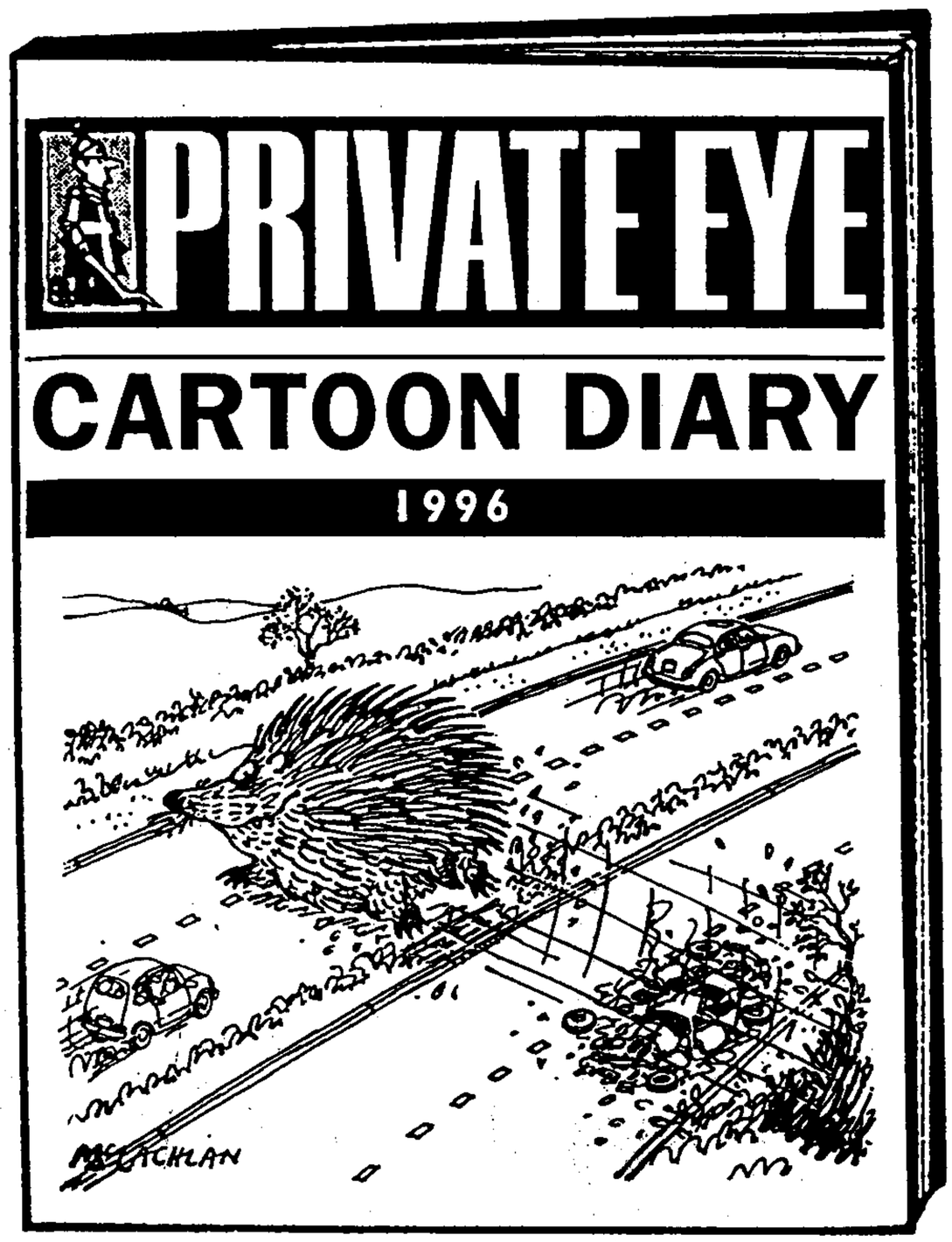

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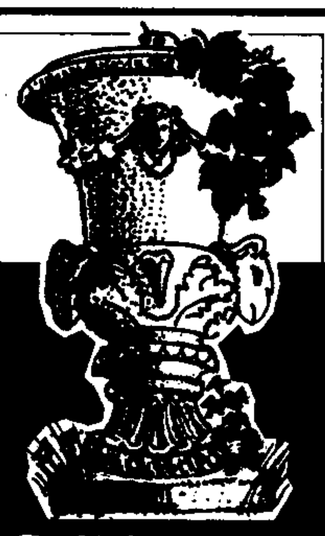

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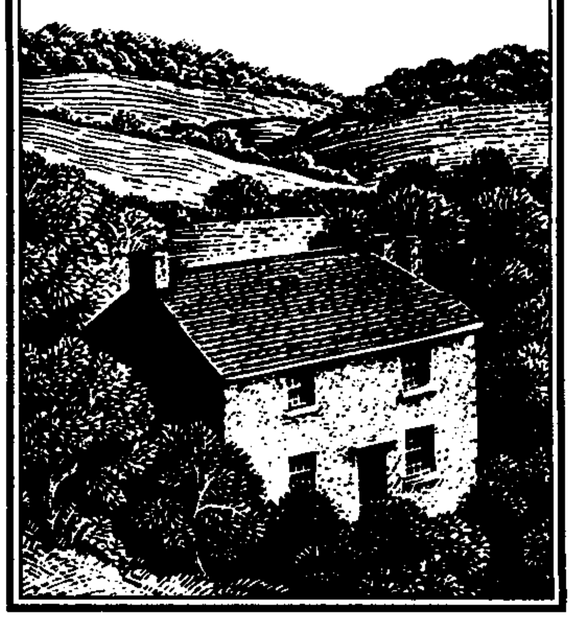

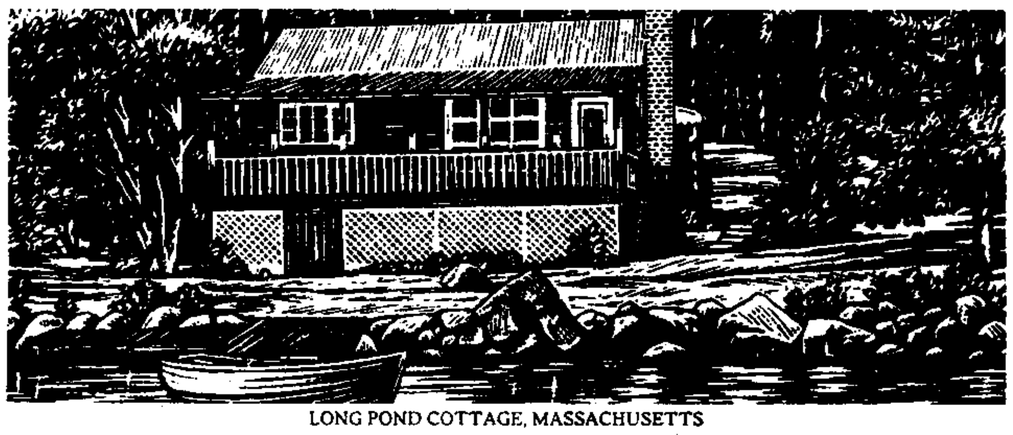

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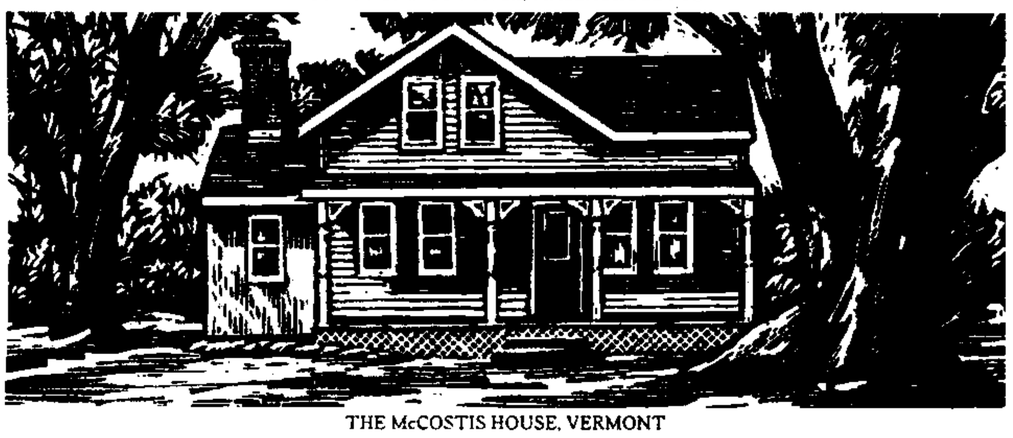

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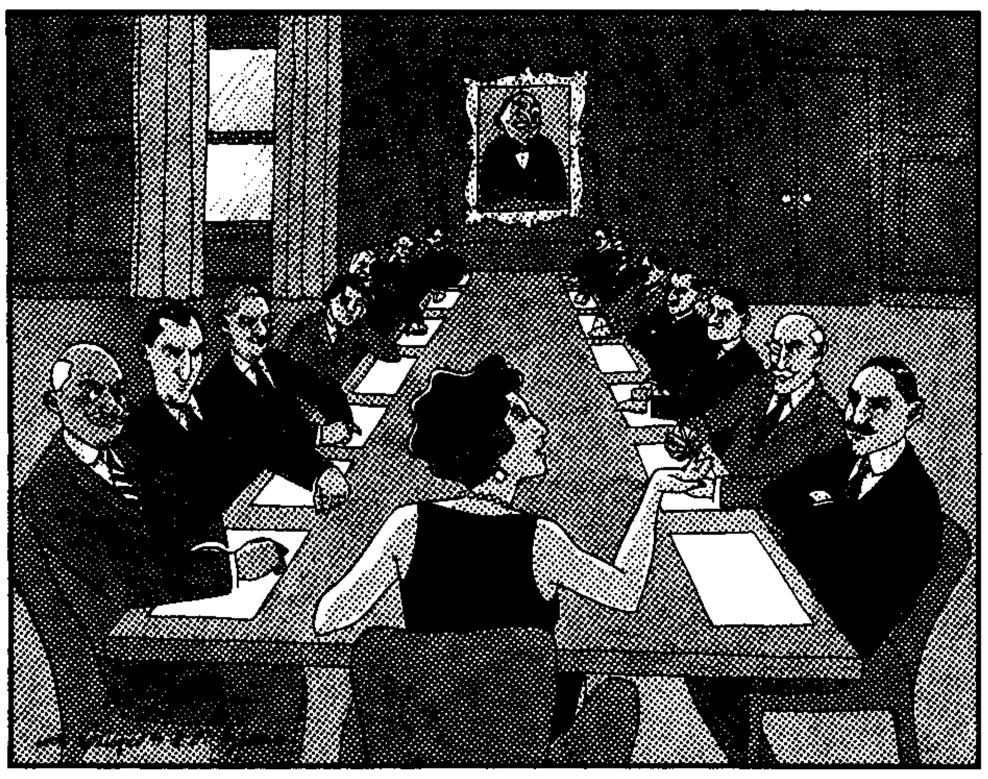

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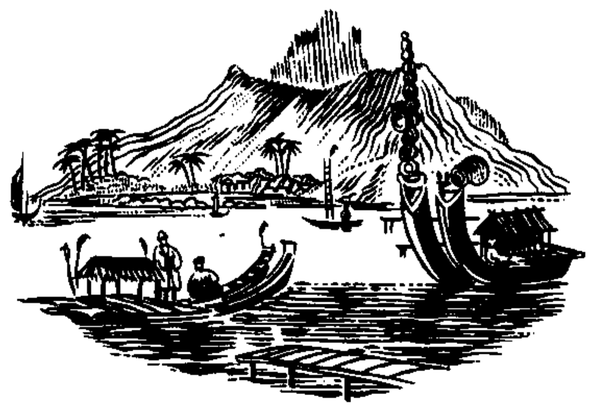

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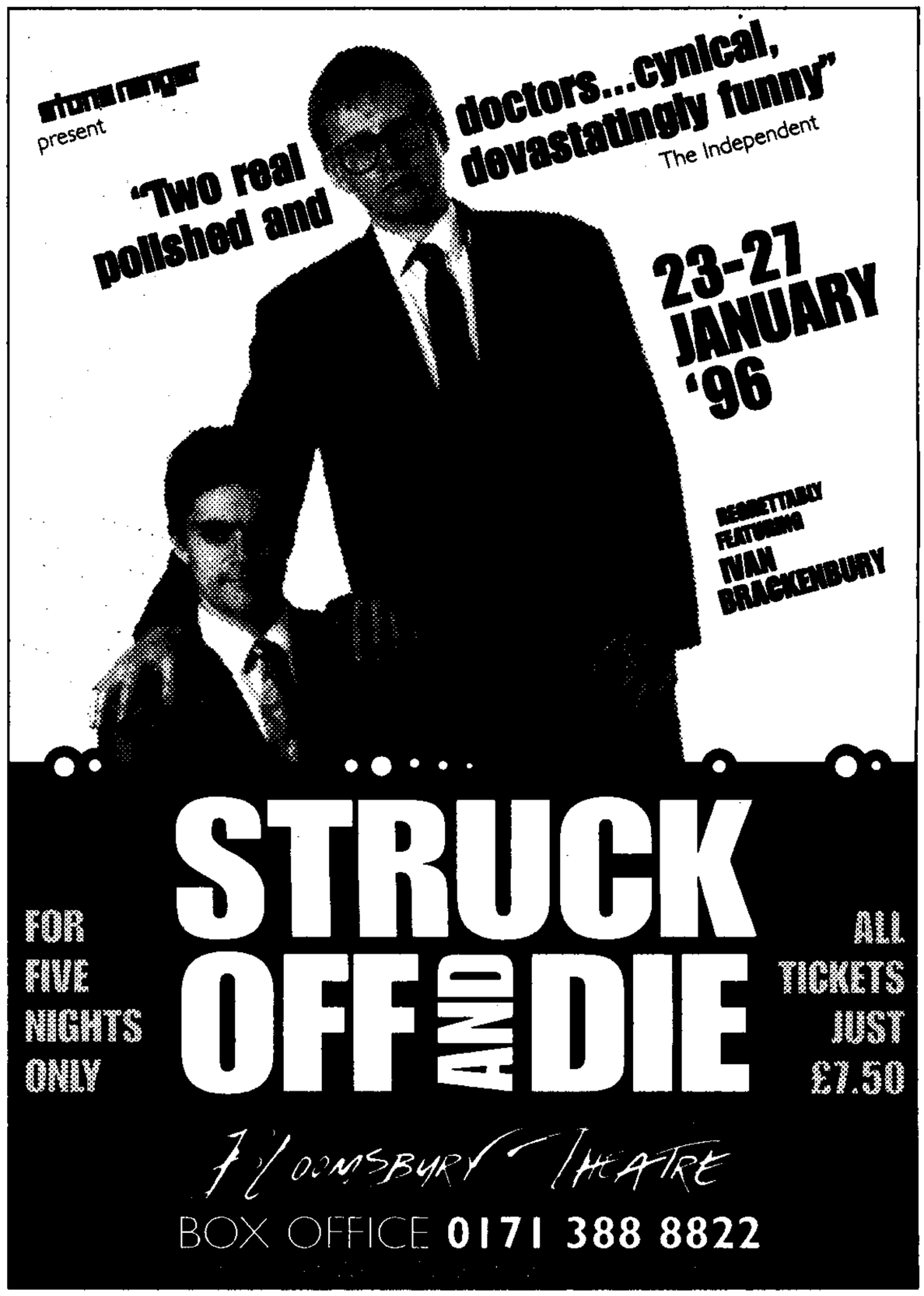

Gnome

THIS country has a long and honourable tradition of Free Speech and the granting of asylum to the opponents of tyranny.

Normally I would be the first to subscribe to this noble and worthy precedent.

However, the case of Dr Trub-Al-Macca is entirely different. This so-called dissident is seeking to criticise the ancient Kingdom of Sandi Gallia (founded 1953) under its benign and enlightened despot, King Ali Babar the Elephant and his Forty Thieving Relatives. *(Some Mustaq, surely?)*

It is all very well for the liberal do-gooders to defend some ridiculous concept of freedom of speech and asylum for dangerous terrorists but in the real world they would do well to reflect that millions of British jobs are at stake here.

Not least of all that of an elderly armaments tycoon who has worked hard for years to amass a large personal fortune for the benefit not only of himself but of his masseuse, Ms Rita Chevrolet.

Should the lives of these decent God-fearing folk be ruined for the sake of some bearded loony with a briefcase full of Semtex who is known to be stalking the Princess Royal, the Queen and Miss Anthea Turner? Clearly not.

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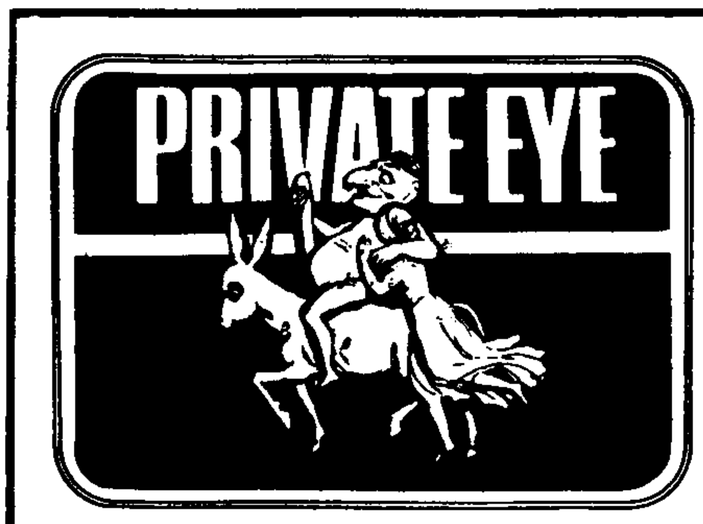

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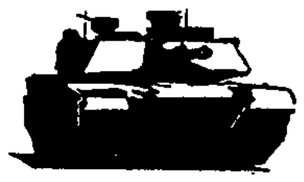

WHO'S WHO IN THE SAUDI ARMS CONSPIRACY

1 DAVID GORE-BOOTH, outgoing British ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Gore-Booth was commercial attaché at the Riyadh embassy during the Helen Smith scandal in the early 1980s and tried to tone down the *Eye*'s coverage of the case. He had a torrid time when he gave evidence to the Scott inquiry in the summer of 1993, especially with his helpful generalisations, such as: "It has been our assumption for generations that when the Jordanians tell us something it is true"; and, conversely: "The Iranians do not think logically." (See *Gore-Blimey of the FO*, *Eye* 829, 24 Sept 1993).

2 ANDREW GREEN, ingoing British ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Mr Green is named in the diaries of Oliver North, former adviser to President Reagan on the Iran-Contra scandal which started in 1984. In May of that year Green, who was then a counsellor at the British embassy in Washington, met North for discussions about the latter's arms-for-hostages plans. The following year Green was transferred to the British embassy in Riyadh where he lasted through both the Al Yamamah arms deals signed by Mrs Thatcher and King Fahd in 1985 and 1987 — the biggest arms deals in world history.

In 1988, he came back to London to take charge of the government response to the bombing of an American airliner over Lockerbie. He supervised the dramatic shift in the FO's line about Lockerbie. At first the Iranian and Syrian governments were blamed, but as Syria rallied to the US and Britain over the 1991 gulf war, the finger of FO suspicion over Lockerbie started to point towards Libya. In that same year, 1991, Green became HM ambassador in Syria. In 1994 he joined the board of Vickers and is now going back to take charge of the embassy in Riyadh. (See *Eye* 885, 17 November 1995).

3 SIR COLIN CHANDLER was marketing director of British Aerospace when he went into the ministry of defence in 1985 to take charge of the defence export sales organisation (DESO). DESO's job was to sell arms abroad from companies like British Aerospace. In 1988 Sir Colin left the MoD to become chairman of Vickers.

4 DAVID HASTIE was Colin Chandler's deputy marketing director at British Aerospace (BAe). In 1988, the year Chandler left the MoD, Hastie went into it. His job at the ministry was to sell the BAe Hawk fighter jet to dictatorships abroad — including Iraq. In 1989 Hastie wanted to go to the Baghdad arms fair. There was still a government arms embargo on Iraq, so MoD officials were banned from attending the fair. On the flight from London to Baghdad, therefore, Hastie's status was subtly changed. He was "seconded" once more to British Aerospace. He thus went to the fair as a British Aerospace executive, and when he left the fair he miraculously became an MoD official once more. Intensely disappointed by the government's decision in the summer of 1989 not to sell Hawk to Iraq, Hastie left the ministry and teamed up once again with his old boss Chandler at Vickers. (See *The Battle of Hastie* in *NOT THE SCOTT REPORT*, the *Eye*'s November 1994 pamphlet on the Scott hearings, only a few copies left — hurry hurry hurry.)

PART of the government smear campaign against Dr Mohammed al Mas'ari is to claim that his information about the Saudi dynasty is complete rubbish. That is not the *Eye*'s experience.

After the *Eye* had published a series of articles about his plight, Dr Mas'ari came to lunch at the *Eye* last November and explained the real reason the Saudi finance minister Suleiman Asuliam had been sacked.

The ambitious Mr Asuliam had been told by the king to solve the liquidity crisis which was plaguing the country. After a great deal of thought and research, he told the king there was nothing for it but to impose ruthless controls on the export of funds from the kingdom. The king didn't want to hear this, and when Asuliam stuck to his remedy he was fired.

A few weeks later the Saudi budget was published. The *Financial Times* of 3 January commented: "Some bankers and diplomats expressed surprise that the budget forecast *an increase* [our italics] in the fiscal deficit."

THE Gulf Centre of Strategic Studies and its generous proprietor Omar Al Hassan got an honourable mention in the *Observer* on 7 January as virulent opponents of Dr Ma'sari.

The *Observer* revealed the Dr Al Hassan has "unlimited access to the House of Commons, and is registered as a research assistant to William Powell, Tory MP for Corby". But the *Observer* forgot to point out that Dr Al Hassan is the only MP's research assistant in history who regularly pays the MP he does research for.

The *Eye* of 4 November 1994 revealed that Mr Powell had had £6,000 in regular cheques from the Gulf Centre for Strategic Studies — payments he did not declare in the MPs' register of interests and still does not do so.

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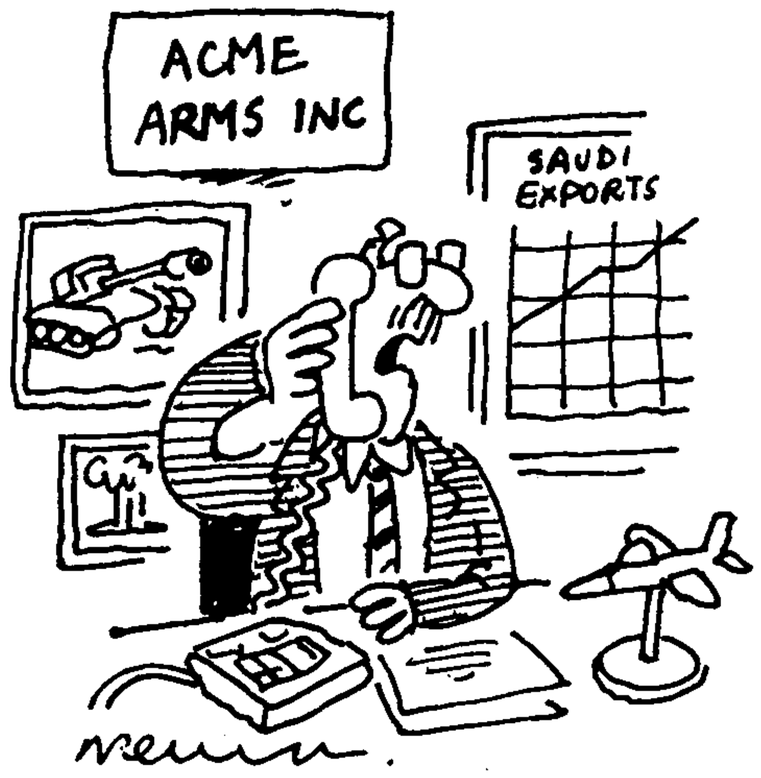

"Perhaps we can sell you something to shoot him with"

Street of Shame

TO JOLLY up her office Christmas party, *Sun* woman's page editor Jane Moore instructed guests to bring pictures of themselves as toddlers — the game being to match up the beautiful babies with today's raddled hacks and hackettes.

However, Moore slipped in a "wild card" in the form of a photo of the infant Adolf Hitler. Curiously most contestants matched this snap with the *Sun*'s manic deputy editor, Neil Wallis. It was, as one guest explained, the mad staring eyes that clinched it.

SUNDAY, the *News of the World*'s pisspoor colour supplement, is plumbing new depths under the editorship of Judy Mcguire.

The pre-Christmas issue had all the predicable items, including a feature on "Xmas" crackers as tested by someone called Mickey Hutton. Who is Mr Hutton? He is a Geordie actor who once had a part in *Spender* and is now, we were told, presenter of Channel 4's *Think Tank*. If you don't know, *Think Tank* is a major daytime TV quiz show watched by absolutely no one.

Though there's nothing wrong with Mr Hutton's lack of celebrity, how odd that *Sunday* didn't mention his other claim to fame and the identity of the person with whom he would be pulling his own Christmas crackers. Step forward one Judy Mcguire — wife of Mickey Hutton and editor of *Sunday*!

HACKS at the *Daily Telegraph* are increasingly concerned about Dean Godson, one of the paper's innumerable young rightwing pundits.

His habit of addressing Frank Johnson as "Daddy" was alarming enough; but now he has confessed to his editor, Charles Moore, that he has another problem. "My tongue is growing," he explained anxiously. "If it gets any bigger I don't see how it will fit in my mouth. And at the same time my penis is shrinking. What can I do?"

Although Charles Moore is an immensely wise and knowledgeable man, even he was stumped for an answer.

HACKS on the *Independent* used to be able to collect a free copy of their paper from the office foyer on their way into work. But not any more: Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson has stopped the practice.

"Call me old-fashioned," he explained to one disgruntled hack, "but I think people ought to buy the newspaper." Alas, to judge by the *Indie*'s plummeting circulation, there are all too few "old-fashioned" people around.

THE retirement of Brian "Mussolini" Hitchen as editor of the *Sunday Express* could cause career problems for Brian O'Hanlon, bow-tied travel writer who commutes between his job as travel editor at the *Sunday Express* and his job as travel editor at the *Daily Star*.

One of O'Hanlon's functions at the *Star* was to fight off the advertising department which insisted that writing about Butlins was more suitable for the downmarket rag's audience than penning articles on the Bahamas. His pisspoor pieces were derided by the subs, who believe he only owed his continuing employment to his second function: organising freebie trips for *Star* executives and for the Duce's son, Alexander Hitchen.

He also set up several trips for Hitchen Snr to South Africa in the pre-Mandela days, as well as holidays in Ireland. He would often go along on these expensive vacations — purely in a reporting capacity — with Musso and his missus. In fact, he was almost treated as one of the Hitchen family.

PS: In 1962, Brian Hitchen married Miss Ellen Josephine O'Hanlon of Kildare, Ireland.

PETER McHACKEY, the World's Worst Columnist, has lost no time in transferring his loyalty to the *Evening Standard*'s newly installed editor, Max "Hitler" Hastings.

A month ago in features conference, Stewart Steven declared that London has the best restaurants in the world. McHackey readily agreed and pointed out that the London restaurant scene was so vibrant that chefs from New Zealand come here to train.

Last week, however, when "Hitler" sounded off about the appalling self-inflated restaurant industry and explained that he was able to host a dinner for ten at his home for as little as £120, McHackey volunteered his whole-hearted support for this bold defiance of fashion and pointed out that things had come to such a pretty pass that London restaurants have even resorted to hiring chefs from New Zealand.

PS: Perhaps McHackey is right to suck up to his cruel new boss. Before arriving Hitler dumped Stephen Glover, the associate editor and political columnist, and Alison Veness, the fashion editor; and since taking over has sacked the sports editor, the travel editor and the motoring correspondent. All the sacking clearly exhausted Hitler by the Thursday evening of his first week — he had to take the Friday off.

FRANK JOHNSON's recruitment of embarrassingly dim Petronella Wyatt to the *Spectator* has revived speculation about the exact nature of their friendship.

"Do *you* think I'm having an affair with him?" she asked another of her father-confessors, Alexander Chancellor, the other day.

"No, you can't be," Chancellor replied wearily. "Because otherwise you wouldn't be trying so hard to make people think you are."

"All right, I'll take them to the recycling centre"

SUNDAY *Torygraph* editor Domineering Lawson has now been losing staff rather than poaching them.

A desperate phone call he made to moralising hackette Mary Kenny, who had resigned her column in the review section to write for the "new-look" *Daily Express* did not help at all.

Kenny took the call on her mobile phone at the hairdresser's. "Now, Mary, I gather you've resigned," said Lawson. "Dat's right, m'dear," answered Kenny in her lilting Irish tones. "Well, I shall require that you work out your contract," stated Lawson authoritatively. "Der's only one problem wiv dat, m'dear," she explained. "I don't have a contract."

JUST FANCY THAT!

THE property market is deep in the doldrums in South Wales, where the *Western Mail*'s housing supplement of 16 December devoted its front page to Old Mill Lodge, a property for sale in Michaelston-y-Fedw owned by John and Maureen Llewellyn.

It said they were selling because their two daughters have grown up and left home and the house is now too big for them. But page five of the same day's paper hints that Mr and Mrs Llewellyn might have a more pressing reason for leaving their home for the last 10 years.

Both are appearing before Cardiff magistrates accused of trying to hire a hitman to kill a Mr David Llewellyn, boyfriend of their 24-year-old daughter Claire and father of their grandchildren.

WORLD OF TAKEOVERS

ONE unexpected outcome of Granada's takeover bid for Forte plc has been the revelation in Forte's defence document that over the last decade its 27 pisspoor Welcome Break service stations have all been awarded rent holidays by the department of transport until 2030.

The DoT claims the concession, secret until now, is "to enable Forte to provide a better service to users". Any driver who has ever stopped at an Unwelcome Break knows bollocks when they hear it, so what on earth could explain this quite unnecessary largesse to a bunch of lucrative service stations, some turning over more than £10 million a year?

Innocents might raise eyebrows at the £1.4 million bunged by Trusthouse Forte to the Conservative party over the last 17 years. But that certainly *wasn't* in return for rent concessions, the *Eye* can reassure readers: the three Fortes who work for the company have already had a peerage, a knighthood and a CBE between them since 1982!

AS THE new year's day edition of the *Indescribablydoomed* rolled off the presses, a machine minder at the Manchester printing plant glanced at an early copy — and was surprised to notice a few changes to the list of senior staff which appears on the leader-page. (See below.)

The alarm was instantly raised. Poor old Charlie "Gorbals" Wilson made a hurried departure from his Hogmanay revels and raced to Canary Wharf at 1am, frothing with rage, to find out which mischievous sub-editor had committed the atrocity. Meanwhile, the 20,000 copies already printed were ordered to be pulped.

Alas, one copy of the rogue issue has survived and found its way to the *Eye*. And, in spite of a thorough search of the computer system, the saboteur has still not been identified.

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HALLO!

THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! HEARTFELT sympathy to the Queen, whose confidential handwritten *billet doux* telling Prince Charles to get a divorce somehow found its way into the wrong hands.

How the tip-off reached the *Sun* and its editor Stuart Higgins is a mystery — as is the reason for the *Sun*'s regular flattery of the former Mrs Camilla Parker Bowles, whom it describes as "restrained", "responsible" and "discreet".

Friends of the Marquesa who ride with the Beaufort hunt are quite mistaken, however, when they recall that in the early 80s Mrs Parker Bowles struck up an unlikely but cordial acquaintance with a vulgar young *Sun* specimen called Stuart Higgins, who had been sent to the West Country to gather dirt on hunt saboteurs.

The idea that the two are still in touch, as my man in the saddle suggests, is absurd; and the suggestion that the lovely "Godzilla" is feeding favourable puffs to the *Sun* should be stamped upon instantly. It's about as likely as the Princess of Wales briefing a *Daily Mail* journalist in her own car late at night!

HALLO! POOR Camilla — there has also been ill-informed chatter about her having issued "marry me" ultimatums to Charles. No, that isn't the way things are done in well-bred circles.

Camilla's only grouse is that having loyally stuck by the witless Brian she has no intention of throwing it all away now. Indeed, she will need all the support she can get — especially when her full losses from the Lloyd's syndicate Gooda Walker are known. They could be as high as £500,000 and counting. Poor old Brian — *two* women who are short of money!

HALLO! GOOD NEWS for sweet Tory MP Michael Brown, who had to resign as a junior government whip 18 months ago after it was "alleged" that he had a friendship with a 20-year-old male student.

Prince Edward has leapt to the rescue by hiring Michael as a consultant to his film company, Ardent Productions, to work on a political satire called *Annie's Bar*. Michael has now bravely admitted openly that he is "gay".

HALLO! *CLEARING away the year's Christmas cards on Twelfth Night I am touched by the sincere message in the card from David Amess, new Tory candidate in Southend West. "Southend is such a great place!" it reads*

If David doesn't mislay outgoing Paul Channon's 11,920 majority, he will make such a loyal MP in Southend — just like the other David Amess, in fact, the Tory MP for Basildon who has regularly told the Commons what a "superb" place Basildon is.

A typical Hansard entry from 23 January last year reports him thus: "I love Basildon... Basildon is beautiful." This fawning continued for 23 minutes until the floppy-haired Essex boy declared: "Basildon is the beacon of the south. The whole world should realise that!"

Well, that was until the polls indicated that Basildon no longer looked winnable for a Tory and the loyal Amess joined the chicken run to "superb" Southend.

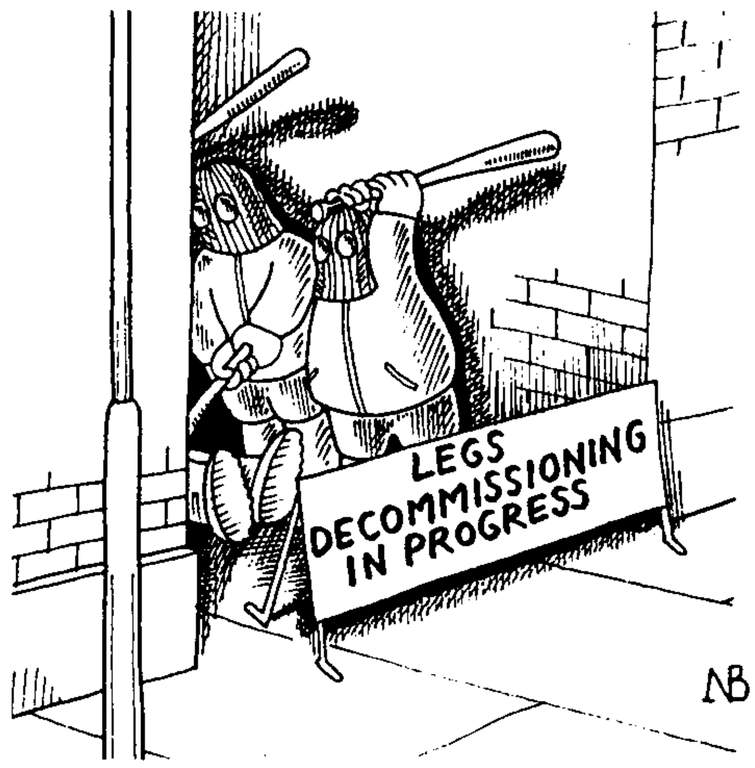
HALLO! NO ONE is more bountiful than my minstrel chum, Sting. Rain forests, remote Amazonian tribes... alas, when it comes to local tradespersons, Gordon Sumner and his wife Trudi Styler are not so revered.

The Stings are inclined, an antiques trader snivels to the Marquesa, to borrow the odd expensive item on "approval" just to see how it looks. Thereafter, the wretched shopkeeper wails, "they just sit on it forever!"

No doubt if the dealer wore a loincloth and lived in a tree the cheque would be in the post pronto!

'The Marquesa'

ULSTER — LATEST



CHARITY

MIDLAND Bank took great pleasure announcing that it had given up corporate Christmas cards this year in favour of donations to charity.

It gave a total of £75,000 —- £25,000 each to Crisis, Help the Aged and Whizz Kidz — which are all deserving concerns.

Last year, however, the Midland spent not £75,000 on cards but £90,000. So what did it do with the other £15,000? It ended up in the pockets of Messrs Murdoch, Montgomery, Stevens and Conrad Black as the bank paid for a newspaper campaign telling everyone how generous it was.

Worth less:

Nigel Mansell – £33m
Rod Stewart – £30m
Michael Winner – £28
Michael Caine – £25m

Source: Sunday Times richest 500

Grauniad

Humbug of the Year

"TRAITOR MP Emma Nicholson's stunning hypocrisy is exposed today," the *Sun* thundered last week, having discovered that as recently as last October she was publicly praising John Major's leadership.

The *Sun* should know. Here are some of its editorial comments on John Major from the past year:

January 1995:. "MAJOR'S ON THE RIGHT LINES NOW," the *Sun* gushes, praising the PM for becoming more anti-European. "This is music to our ears, Mr Major. You've seen the light and joined the Right."

February 1995:. In a full-page editorial the *Sun* accuses Major of "dithering" over Europe. "This is a tired government led by a man who many people increasingly feel is not up to the job. If he cannot find the backbone to act with authority, then the Tories must find themselves another leader who can."

April 1995: "Make no mistake," the *Sun* announces, "the 1997 General Election campaign has started... Major is showing that he has fire in his belly and a will to win." Four days later — under the heading "The *Sun* Speaks Its Mind" — it has second thoughts: "The Tories haven't got a hope in hell of winning the Election unless they wake their ideas up... It'll take one vital missing ingredient to turn their fortunes round: LEADERSHIP." It describes John Major as "daft".

May 1995: On the eve of the local elections the *Sun* issues a dire warning: "If the Tories are wiped out there will be a clamour for Major to go. That would be a mistake. The Tories cannot afford to change their leader again... So don't cut off John Major's nose tomorrow. You could end up spiting your own face." A couple of weeks later the paper has a rethink. "In a single thunderous eruption Margaret Thatcher sums up the crisis facing this embattled government... Under John Major's leadership, you might just as well vote Labour. Her assessment is typically blunt and on target."

June 1995: A memorable month. On 12 June it attacks Labour's enthusiasm for a single currency. "Major knows differently. And he understand that the people of Britain want nothing to do with a United States of Europe." On Europe, it concludes, "he's a winner". Or is he? "John Major's had it," the *Sun* says on 17 June. "He's finished." Why so? He has made the mistake of being "afraid to speak his mind" on Europe. On 23 June, after his announcement of a leadership contest, it is delirious. "At last! John Major shows the country true leadership... It is a bold gamble. Major is rolling the dice and hoping it turns up a six. Shrewdly, he has tried to lock the Cabinet into pledges of support... That is good news for the Conservative Party and good news for the country."

The very next day, it changes its mind. "It is essential that someone with credibility and stature takes Major on... The Cabinet should be freed from their meaningless oath of loyalty."

July 1995: On 3 July, the day before the election, the *Sun* reverses the advice it gave local council voters in May. "Vote Major and you let in Labour," it warns Tory MPs. "The man has loser written all over him... Major could not lead a cinema queue, let alone a country."

September 1995: Now that the dust has settled, the man who couldn't lead a cinema queue is suddenly back in favour. "Everyone is agog as events unfold in Bosnia and Northern Ireland, two of the world's trouble spots," it observes. "If anyone deserves the credit, it is John Major... Someone should nominate John Major for the Nobel Peace Prize."

October 1995: The *Sun* is in raptures over Major's conference speech. "John Major's Britain in the 21st century will have lower taxes and lower state spending, the Enterprise Centre of Europe... Back to the future with Major is back to true Conservatism... Major's strength is that underneath it all he is an ordinary bloke. He understands what REAL life is all about."

Now where have we heard that before? Ah yes. "After the Thatcher debacle," the *Sun* commented in June last year, "we thought John Major was the fresh, new blood this country needed. He was a decent, ordinary bloke who understood what decent, ordinary people believe in. Well, we were right about the decent. Sadly, we were also spot-on about the ordinary."

As the *Sun* said last week in its attack on Emma Nicholson: "Talk about two-faced!"

IN THE TEAROOM

NO HAPPY new year for Michael Portillo, once the unchallenged *caudillo* of the Tory right who threatened to seize the leadership ahead of the general election.

Then came the wilderness months following John Major's summer showdown. And after Portillo's xenophobic party conference speech was rubbished by even the *Daily Mail*, the prime minister brusquely told him he could say what he liked in cabinet about boots, webbing and Brasso, but on serious matters — like Europe and the economy — he must henceforth sit quietly, hold his hand up and wait to be asked. Meanwhile, two thirds of the Portillista falange had quietly dribbled across to John Redwood.

Although Portillo talks of little but Redwood nowadays, he was busy with Bosnia throughout November so it was only over the Christmas holidays that the defence secretary found time to plot a political comeback with his crony, David Hart.

Eye readers will remember Hart as the unofficial adviser to Margaret Thatcher who ran covert actions against Arthur Scargill from a suite at Claridges during the miners' strike. Nowadays, operating from his country house in Suffolk, he presides over a salon for ex-spooks, reactionary journalists and social climbing MPs.

A Portillo rescue plan was quickly drawn up over the mince pies. Operating in groups of four, like the SAS, supporters would hit the tearoom running, armed with stories of how well Michael was performing the role of Balkan peacemaker while reminding anyone who'd listen that Redwood was as crazy as a sackful of tomcats. The valiant vulcan's new think-tank, Conservatives 2000, would be dubbed "2001 — a Space Oddity" and, frequent mention would be made of Redwood's wordless, head-bobbing rendition of the Welsh national anthem.

But no sooner had the first assault team gone into action than it came under friendly fire as the defence secretary announced his loopy plan to turn Admiralty Arch into flats for super-rich stalkers slavering for a clear view into the Buckingham Palace bathroom. Portillo really hated being called a creep by the Old Sea Dog in Chief, but was even more upset by the news that an exasperated Hart might be transferring his patronage to another leadership hopeful. Who could this be? Step forward, foreign secretary Malcolm Rifkind.

'Urquhart'

A BY-ELECTION in Devon West & Torridge, the constituency of Tory defector Emma Nicholson, might suit everyone except the squabbling local activists of the party thought most likely to win it — her adopted Liberal Democrats.

The timing of Nicholson's defection and her current interest in taking up the Tory hierarchy's challenge to resign and fight a by-election are not entirely matters of principle, it seems. The slim 3,600 majority with she held the seat for the Tories in the face of a determined challenge by her new party is only part of the attraction.

For it is the state of her one-time opponents in the rambling sheep-country that may yet prove decisive in persuading Nicholson to stand down and fight a by-election under Paddy Ashdown's colours. Incredibly, nearly four years into the current parliament, the Lib Dems do not yet have a candidate in one of their most winnable seats.

Bitter divisions between party branches in the north and south of the constituency, some unsubtle rule bending and a local executive with more than a few megalomaniacs mean the local Lib Dems are currently struggling to select their third prospective parliamentary candidate in less than a year after two resignations for "personal reasons". The last London-based innocent lasted six months.

Nicholson wants to stay in politics and a successful by-election in which she buffed up her Liberal credentials might give her the edge in any party contest for a nominee in the general election that would follow. As a winner, presenting herself as a unity candidate to the party faithful in a seat the leaden-footed activists have singularly failed to win, she might be unbeatable.

But not that unbeatable, say the Tory's divide-and-rule strategists. They calculate that any Nicholson candidacy in a by-election or general election would not go unchallenged, with one or more of the bickering local party activists standing as unofficial Liberals.

A few thousand votes siphoned off by these mavericks, combined with a resurgent Labour party in the north of the constituency, might just allow the Tories to hang on. A morale-boosting, first Tory by-election victory since 1989?

FAMILIES and supporters of the three men in prison for the murder of newspaper boy Carl Bridgewater are still suffering from shock at the home secretary's statement that he is "minded" not to send the case to the appeal court even before revealing to the men's lawyers the evidence that leads him to that opinion.

The facts are predictable: C3, the home office department that deals with alleged injustices, was preparing to send the results of its inquiries to the men's lawyer without comment. It was stopped from doing so by a personal telephone call from Michael Howard, the home secretary himself, insisting that the sending of the papers coincided with a press statement indicating that Howard has no intention of reopening the case.

THE successful campaign by Tony Blair and his coterie to block the selection of leftwinger Liz Davies as a candidate in the crucial marginal seat of Leeds North East is still not over.

Efforts are now afoot to delay the selection of a replacement, thus enabling Walworth Road to appoint a candidate and eliminate the embarrassing possibility that local members might vote for yet another lefty.

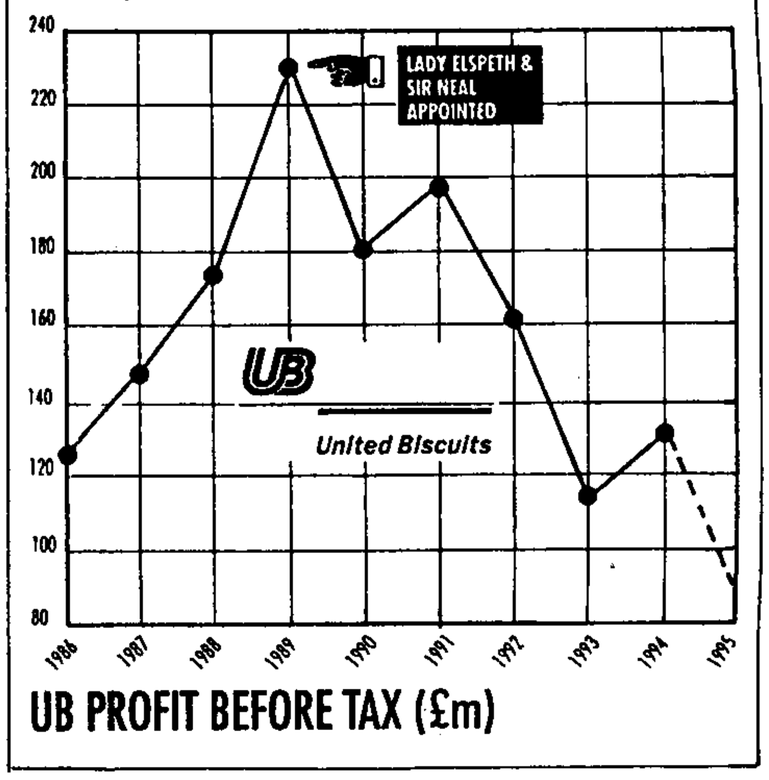
The new selection procedure will be overseen by the party's regional office. But, alas, the full timers are "too busy" at the moment. This is the same office that ordered "Lefty Liz" and the Leeds NE party to remain silent in the face of the press campaign against her last summer, leaving the field free for Blair's spin doctors to plant anti-Davies stories in the media unchallenged.

Meanwhile the saga of the libel battle (see *Eye* 886) between her and three fellow Islington councillors — all closely linked to Blair's North London circle — has taken a strange turn. It was recently alleged that the three had been given legal and financial support from Walworth Road to defend themselves against Ms Davies. "We don't have any problem with this," one press officer told incredulous hacks. "They were acting in their official capacity... They were asked by the NEC to submit those statements... That's why we're supporting them."

Perhaps the spokesperson should have checked with Peter Coleman, the party's director of organisation, first. When outraged party members wrote to him demanding to know why party funds were being used in this manner, he flatly denied his own press officers' allegations. "The three people involved in the case have not, to my knowledge, sought the party's legal advice. They have not requested financial assistance from the Labour party, and nor has any been given."

He concludes by vainly hoping that "this helps to clarify the position". His letters to party members and the press officers' remarks to journalists cannot both be true. But who is lying and why?

British Management Part 32.
LADY ELSPETH HOWE, Chairman Broadcasting Standards Council, President UNICEF UK, Director Kingfisher plc, Legal & General, Director United Biscuits plc since 1989.
SIR NEIL SHAW, Chairman Tate & Lyle, Chairman Association of Lloyds Members 1992-94. Director United Biscuits plc since 1989.



SUCCESSIVE Tory secretaries of state of Wales have treated Wales as a political football. But with the Cardiff Bay Development they have scored an own goal.

The policy, first initiated by Nicholas Edwards, has been to use big amounts of public money (£51 million next year) to turn Cardiff's derelict docks into a property boom town. This policy was led by the building in Cardiff Bay of Crickhowell House as the HQ of the Welsh Health Common Services Authority (WHCSA), the NHS bureaucracy in Wales.

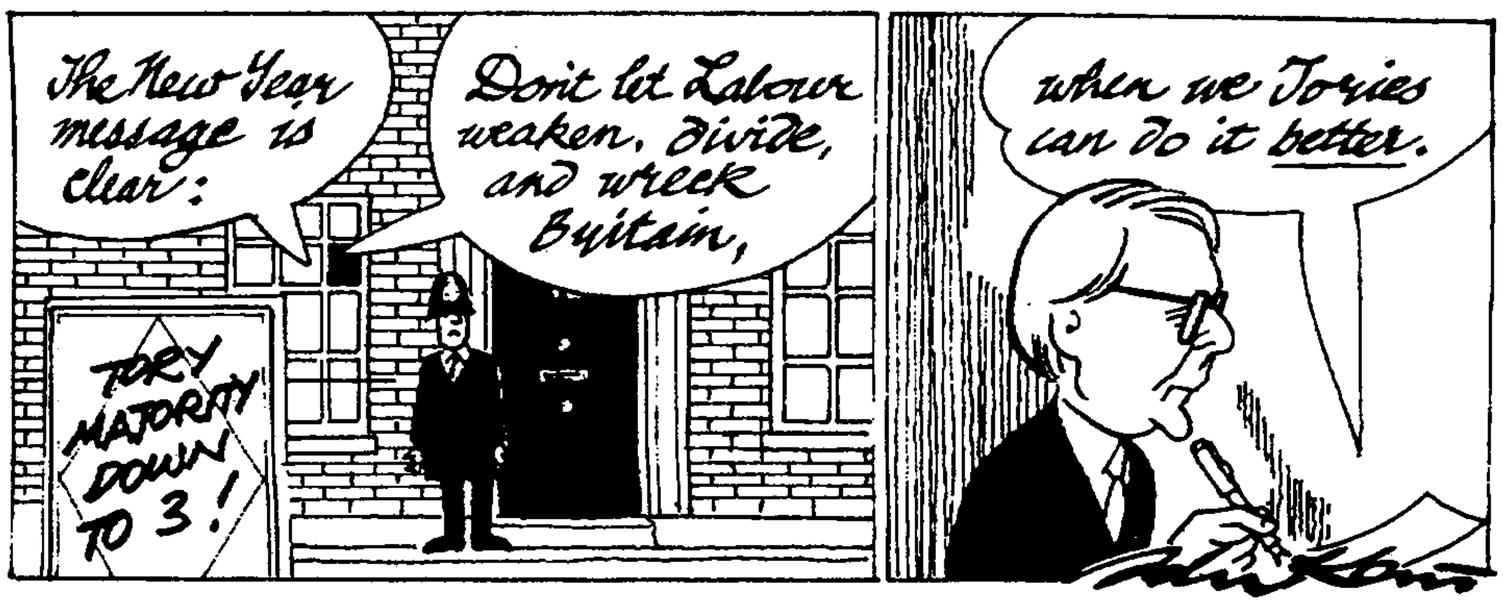
Unfortunately when the dry John Redwood became Welsh secretary, however, he decided that Welsh NHS bureaucrats should be privatised. The WHCSA was broken into groups and allowed to find the most "efficient" way of working.

Most have therefore now decided that the £10 a square foot rent charged at Crickhowell House is far too expensive. Local property values have slumped; £10 is twice the going rate elsewhere in Cardiff; and so the bureaucrats are planning to move out.

That leaves current Welsh minister William Hague paying £1.5 million a year of taxpayers' money to the landlord, Grosvenor Waterside, for what will be a largely empty office block, with leaky windows, for the rest of the 25-year lease. Any hope of sub-letting the white elephant depends on a property boom — but then Crickhowell House was built to kickstart that property boom in the first place.

PS: The building is named after Lord Crickhowell, formerly Nicholas Edwards, who is now a director of Associated British Ports... which owns Grosvenor Waterside... which will be laughing all the way to the bank for the next 22 years.

'Backbiter'


The New Year message is clear:
Don't let Labour weaken, divide, and wreck Britain,
TORY MAJORITY DOWN TO 3!
when we Tories can do it better.

NOOKS and CORNERS

CLOSING the vista westwards down the High Street of Colchester, the oldest recorded town in Britain, is a great Victorian water tower, some 130ft high.

Built in 1882 by an enlightened Liberal administration to provide the city with fresh water, it was designed by one Charles Clegg who raised the water tank above a brick arched tower in the manner of a Roman triumphal arch. This, presumably, was intended as a compliment to the nearby ruins of the Balkerne Gate, one of the entrances to *Camulodunum*, the capital of Roman Britain.

Known affectionately as "Jumbo", Mr Clegg's water tower is grand, assertive, splendid and vulgar — puritanical Pevsner called it "preposterously massive"; it is a much-loved local landmark and has been listed grade II. My photograph of it comes from a brochure published by Colchester borough council. One might suppose, therefore, that the council is also quite proud of "Jumbo". But no. The council's planning officers are intensely keen that it should be wrecked by a truly preposterous scheme to convert it into a nine-storey block of flats.

In 1974, during one of the regular destructive reconstructions of local government imposed on us by Conservative administrations, Jumbo was transferred to the ownership of Anglian Water. Since then it has become surplus to requirements and so, in these privatised times, it was sold off to a developer. The water tower is now owned by Messrs Square Foot Properties Ltd, of the Old Conveniences, Battersea. These sensitive developers, with their architects Messrs Traer Clark Emptage, of Brentwood, now propose removing the water tank and replacing it with a two-storey steel and glass block of penthouse flats. They also propose demolishing the water tower's central brick spiral staircase and filling in the open arches with yet more flats — to create 19 flats in all.

Such a drastic alteration to and change-of-use for a listed structure in a conservation area surely ought to be laughed out of court — after all, only last year the council refused planning permission for mere radio aerials to be erected on top of Jumbo. Yet now the planning officers seem to be utterly enamoured of this obscure bunch of London developers — developers so sensitive to historic buildings they have already attached seven signs to poor Jumbo without listed building consent. And, thinking of listed building consent, it has now been discovered that, at some point, somebody has taken out the internal tie bars in the water tank —- without consent — so endangering the structure.

In so many stories on this page it is the elected councillors who want to do the worst and the officers who advise against. But this time it is the other way around: the development control sub-committee has rejected the planning application — which is also opposed by English Heritage and the Victorian Society. However, the developers and their allies have not given up and the application comes before the full council on 24 January. As Jumbo has managed to survive the great Colchester Earthquake of the 1880s as well as the attentions of the Luftwaffe, I hope the senators of Camulodunum will do the right thing and firmly tell Square Foot Properties what to do with this disgraceful proposal.

AS I SAY, it is usually the planning and conservation officers (if any) who try to do the right thing and the councillors who misbehave — especially in benighted, misgoverned Liverpool.

Take the case of Sandown Hall, a decent Classical merchant's house of 1810 in Wavertree which Pevsner called "a handsome job". It is listed grade II but, unfortunately, having been used by Messrs United Biscuits as a social club, has been owned by Mr George Downey, a well-known nightclub proprietor, for the last five years.

Sandown Hall is now in a dilapidated condition. Last year the estimate for repairs was £200,000; now, Messrs Drivers Jonas, acting for Mr Downey, claim it will cost £1.2 million to restore. So L. Noble Ltd, acting for Mr Downey, applied to Liverpool council for listed building consent to demolish and planning permission for a development of twilight homes on the site (which is conveniently adjacent to a new housing estate). The planning department firmly rejected this scheme but, at a full council meeting, all the Labour councillors dutifully voted in favour of granting consent to demolish Sandown Hall. I wonder why?

Well, the department of national heritage was furious with Liverpool for sacrificing a listed building without consultation or public inquiry and has slapped a preservation order on Sandown Hall and ordered essential repairs to be carried out. The case has now been called in for public inquiry, which will begin on 24 January. There is much local opposition to the demolition of a potentially fine historic building, but the planning officers of Liverpool council are forbidden to appear or to comment. Such is local democracy.

'Piloti'

If it's true to say that faces are cities, then John Hollinger's is a kind of Cardiff: everything fair, nicely built and open, but altogether more sullen and severe than it might be.

ANDREW O'HAGAN
Guardian

There was also something faintly sinister about the onion and caper sauce, which flowed over and rather repressed the lamb, as if it were a newspaper subject to a government gagging order.

WILL SELF
Observer

"Can we lift Eugene an inch?" My breasts have names. Eugene, always an inch lower, even in puberty, is my left breast. John, ever so slightly smaller, with a better areola, lives on the right. It's always been that way.

MARINA BAKER
Time Out

At the outset, Morrissey is drinking a cup of coffee, and during our discussion he occasionally elides his way out of anything remotely resembling an impasse by alluding to these eatables: "This is such great coffee," he pronounces at one point, and when I ask him what's on his mind he replies: "This KitKat".

These are just the sort of tropes Morrissey comes up with from minute to minute, turning phrases as he does, like rotating signs outside petrol stations. Morrissey is for many people irredeemably associated with the 1980s — and even to say this brings that decade into sharper focus. In the 1980s a particular kind of male adolescent angst and self-pity infused the zeitgeist, and Morrissey was its avatar.

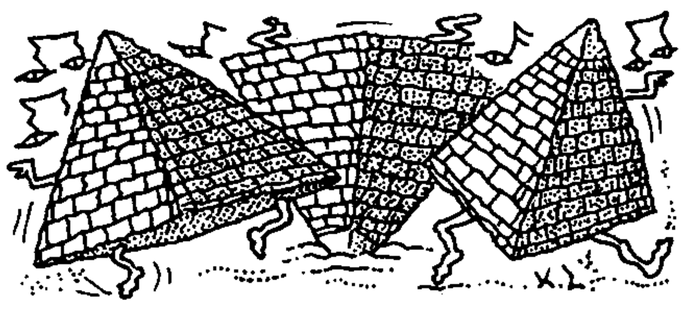
WILL SELF
Observer

Pseuds Corner

EGYPT: 22 Jan-8 Feb '96 with Dr Jonathan & Rachel Sherwood and Colin & Synthia Ramsby-Andrews

Research Subject: Harmonies of the pyramids, including soundings experiments; antigravity fields, Mayan calendar as related to ancient sites, Harmonics applied to the crop circles.

Directors: The basis of Dr Sherwood's work resides in harmonics. Through complex mathematical equations he has determined the harmonics of the



Great Pyramid and translated such into sound frequency. The application of this sound in the Pyramids has the ability to transform metals, to move objects, and to open secret passageways. Since the age of 14 years, Dr Sherwood has been the channel for a 25,000 year old pre-Egyptian High Priest called Zarlen, a master of the Light Brotherhood...

Press release, Beyond Boundaries Inc

One Small Step...with Robin Rudwick & Pippa Smith. 24/25 Feb, Saturday & Sunday 10am-4pm

One Small Step is a workshop exploring the dynamic activity of walking. Starting with exploring how to place our feet firmly on the ground we will explore the actions that make up that first small step. This series of Awareness Through Movement lessons is designed to explore all the components of walking and help develop your own, easy, comfortable walking action that can be used in everyday life for just getting around, running around, or dancing! This workshop is suitable for anybody who would like to move around more easily. Please wear warm, comfortable clothes.

"The Open Centre", Old Street, London EC1

I wonder what's going to happen to Morrissey. My hunch is that he may well find iconic pop status an increasing drag. He is a very funny man to be with, but he keeps his wit well reined in. Just one example of this came when we dissected the "vexed question" of my not having a television. "Is that a political statement?" he asked me, and when I said it was he rejoined: "Do all your neighbours know that you don't possess a television set?"

I think the wit is reined in because it's so destructive of the ironic edifice he has created. Stardom requires a certain kind of stupidity to sustain it, and Morrissey is far from being a stupid man. He is responsible — among other things — for encapsulating 200 years of philosophical speculation in a single line: "Does the mind rule the body or the body rule the mind, I don't know".

WILL SELF
Observer

CONTRIBUTORS: R. Benson, F. Parnell & S. Fretwell, M. Carlson. M. Jay, J. Garton-Sprenger. R. Forbes-Nathan. M. Carlson.

£10 paid for entries

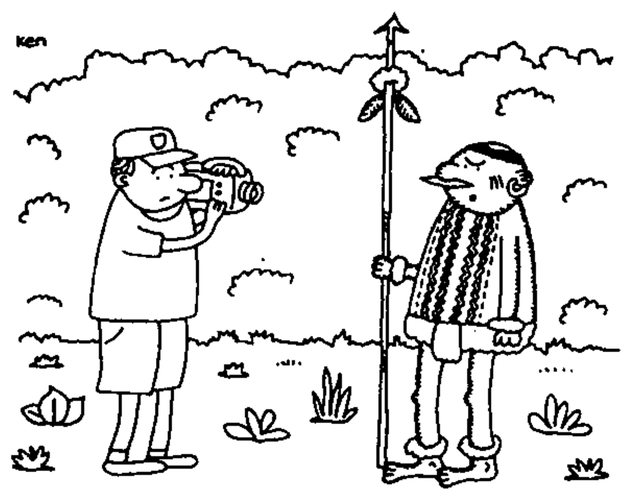
LUVVIES

***EASTENDERS* SPECIAL**

Pat is reunited with Frank after he disappeared when under investigation by the police. "It was a thrill to work with Mike again," said Pam. "We are great friends and filming the Christmas episodes was weird. There were two smiling actors in make-up and then on the set we were shrivelled up with emotion. These are the hardest scenes I've had to play and it left me drained."

PAM ST CLEMENTS (on her relationship with MIKE REID)
Daily Express

Submitted by Andy Miles



"They're not ancient tribal markings — I was run over by a logging truck"

MEDIA NEWS

WHEN cleverclogs Edward de Bono appears on the BBC's revival of *The Brains Trust* the money will no doubt come in handy.

Uncharacteristically, he came over all dim a while back when he invested in the duff Gooda Walker syndicate at Lloyd's, the London insurance market, and he will need all his lateral thinking skills to calculate the final losses.

THE presence of "alternative" comedian Jack Dee's show in the ITV schedules on Saturday night is a triumph not just for Dee but for his bullish, pseudo-Cockney manager Addison Cresswell.

Fans of traditional variety might have been puzzled, however, by the distinctly little-known nature of some of the acts on Dee's bill. "Stomp", for instance, a bunch of enthusiastic young men who bash bin lids together, not only kicked off the first week's show but were booked for the second week — "back by popular demand", allegedly, which suggests the producers didn't read the reviews.

This sudden burst of apparently undeserved fame must have puzzled the leader of "Stomp", Luke Cresswell, coincidentally the brother of Addison Cresswell. Confused variety fans were soon able to forget the bin-lid bashing, however, when the next act came on — comedian Lee Evans, whose manager, by a happy coincidence, is... Addison Cresswell.

ITV's brilliant new star Garry Bushell (he's on at 1.20am) has a rival: a foul-mannered lookalike who has been doing things in public that might well embarrass the *Sun*'s sophisticated TV critic.

At a pre-Christmas celebration at a Vietnamese restaurant in Greenwich diners were appalled when the Bushell lookalike, who was with lively friends, suddenly went quiet. His nose then turned unaccountably red and his head slumped on to the table. Then, one of his witty companions staggered to his feet and yelled: "Garry Bushell with a four inch penis!"

Proof that this could not have been *the* Garry Bushell came when the recumbent figure stirred, looked up and promptly vomited over the whole table.

TRICK question: Which foul Tory government decided to dose the tips of artillery shells with uranium, Maggie O'Kane's Channel Four programme on 3 January having revealed that such shells were widely used in the 1991 gulf war?

Answer: The last Labour government.

Tony Benn's diaries for 22 January 1979, record: "Fred Mulley (defence minister) had proposed that depleted uranium from American nuclear reactors be used for ammunition against Soviet tanks..." He also proposed that "we develop it ourselves and test-fire it".

Benn opposed it but the then prime minister James Callaghan said it must be done "to reassure the Germans". So everyone in the Labour cabinet bar Benn nodded it through.

EYE TV

The Soaps

WHAT on earth can the soaps do to sustain the level of "excitement" they reached at the end of 1995?

Emmerdale (ITV) led the field with Frank Tate discovering his wife Kim had been having an affair with young Dave Glover. Brilliant! Now they just have to watch out that boring animal issues like the transportation of calves and vegetarianism don't spoil the real drama of the actors getting their kit off.

Brookside (C4) wasn't quite so "exciting" with HIV, dead chickens and drugs in lofts replacing the equally tedious body under the patio drama of the previous months.

EastEnders (BBC1) on Christmas Day saw the return of an old face when Frank Butcher, seemingly recovered from a nervous breakdown, returned to find a Man-at-C&A type ensconced in his house. Long speeches full of lines like "Look pal... listen darlin'... wot abaht you an' me darlin'...?" revealed that the character has lost none of his monosyllabic verve while under the doctor's care.

Arthur looked close to the edge of a nervous breakdown in prison, where he has been placed for a) a crime he did not commit; and b) a crime that, even if he had committed it, he would not be held in prison for it in the first place. "Exciting" or what?

Coronation Street (ITV) managed the silliest story-lines and matched them with the most over-the-top performances in any of the soaps. One of their "excitements" was Derek's discovery that Norris was the man who had stolen Arthur, the garden gnome, and sent Derek numerous ransom notes. Wow! It's interesting to note that the increasing silliness of the *Street*'s plots ironically corresponds to a desperately inflated sense of grandeur on the part of those involved with the show.

Julie Goodyear, who played Bet Lynch, departed with the spirit of Elizabeth Taylor: Ken Morley (supermarket manager Reg Holdsworth) died miserably on a stage with his one-man show, but still suffers delusions of stardom. When London Weekend Television, sister company of Granada which makes *Coronation Street*, broadcast a *South Bank* puff to celebrate the *Street*'s 30th anniversary, the weeping and wailing of the *Street* regulars knew no bounds.

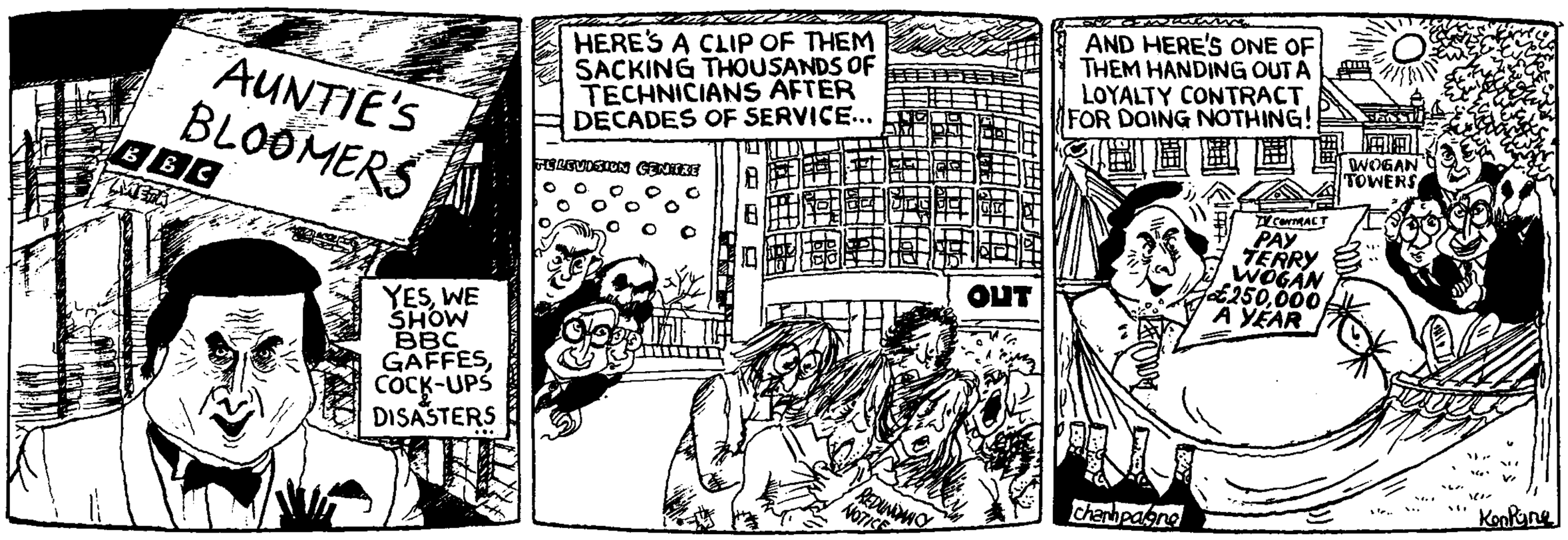
Fatter cast members resented the time the camera spent focused on Sarah Lancashire's minute waist and long legs — there was even a replay of one particularly leggy scene. The writers objected to the time spent on the actors instead of listening to them plotting gnome stories.

The grandeur disease has even spread to the press office, where the two young ladies in charge of the *Street* have decided that it is their job to keep the greatest distance between the press, *Street* "stars" and any information the press requires. So quiet was their activity at the end of the year that tabloid journalists were threatening to boycott coverage of the *Street* in an attempt to rouse the "Silent Twins" or get them sacked.

The press's "dream team" is the **Emmerdale** one, which is why there have been so many positive pieces in the papers about the soap's new sexiness. Ex-TVam supremo Bruce Gyngell, who now runs Yorkshire Television, which makes *Emmerdale*, recognises that the easiest route to press coverage is to bring lots of stars and lots of star-struck journos together in one posh room and encourage them to get outrageously pissed. This they now do with effective regularity.

This year, they also sent out the *Emmerdale* calendar, whose pictures are a veritable Himalayan range of breasts and bulging trousers. Apart from tits, bums and pectorals, *Emmerdale* does at least have some wit in the scripts — a quality matched only by those of *EastEnders* (at least, until *The Return of the Depressive*). *Brookside*'s Miseryside still only manages about one joke in every three episodes, and if the *Street* mob ever manage to climb down from their high horses they might recapture some of the humour that made them famous. Meanwhile we are stuck with "excitement".

'William McTelly'


AUNTIE'S BLOOMERS
BBC
YES, WE SHOW BBC GAFFES, COCK-UPS & DISASTERS...
HERE'S A CLIP OF THEM SACKING THOUSANDS OF TECHNICIANS AFTER DECADES OF SERVICE...
TELEVISION CENTRE
OUT
REDUNDANCY NOTICE
AND HERE'S ONE OF THEM HANDING OUT A LOYALTY CONTRACT FOR DOING NOTHING!
WOGAN TOWERS
TV CONTRACT
PAY TERRY WOGAN £250,000 A YEAR
champagne
KenRyng

IT COULDN'T BE YOU...

THE *Sun*'s brilliant new pundit Anne "Points of View" Robinson bravely attacked the "clever-clogs" who questioned the lottery's right to make her "gloriously, disgustingly rich".

They suggest, she spluttered, that £40 million "is obscene and too much for an untrained ordinary person". Promised Anne: "Believe me, I'll learn fast."

Of course, making the red-haired harridan "disgustingly rich" is something the Dirty Digger has already begun by paying her — in addition to her loot from radio and TV — a modest £280,000 for her fascinating opinions.

Meanwhile comedian Bob Monkhouse has been joining the clever-clogs by arguing that a jackpot of £40 million is indeed far too high. A top prize of about £4 million or £5 million would be quite enough, he believes. He should know. In April Bob will take over the presenter's job on the weekly lottery show, for which he will be paid £15,000 a programme. If he were to keep it up for a year, this none-too-strenuous exercise would net him a salary of £780,000!

"A great privilege, Monsieur — Jean-Paul doesn't comb his hair for just anybody"

ORCADIAN NEWS

THE Orkney islands infamous child abuse cases drag on with children still in care after their families were wrongly implicated in satanic abuse rituals.

While one child of the "W" family has just enjoyed her first family Christmas after five years in care, the oldest "W" child, who alleged abuse after experiencing interview techniques which sheriffs described as "repeated coaching", reached her 21st birthday at the end of last year. She has not spoken to family or friends since October 1990.

Despite this catalogue of disasters Orkney social workers can still celebrate something: a Scottish office report on social work staffing showed that Orkney received the biggest staff increase in Scotland from 1989 to 1994 — a 74.3 per cent rise, giving Orkney a huge 15.2 staff per 1,000 people.

I-BSkyB

Shetlanders had a telly-free Christmas – except for Sky subscribers – after a transmitter was damaged.

KEVIN LUDDEN
The Sun

CONTRIBUTOR: Nick Spence

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

HACKWATCH

WHAT THEY DID ON THEIR HOLIDAYS

PARLIAMENT isn't sitting; the law courts are shut; everyone seems to be on holiday. Yes, summer's a terrible time for columnists with space to fill — but Christmas and the new year are even worse.

Apart from Christmas parties, new year's resolutions, January sales and the cold weather — all of which have been done to death over many years — what are they to write about?

23 December: In the *Times*, Magnus Linklater takes refuge in that old favourite: Christmas Is Overrated. "There is perhaps something to be said for taking Christmas down a peg or two," he suggests.

24 December: A golden rule of Christmas column-writing: if you go somewhere exotic, be sure to mention it. "I don't want to make you jealous," Michael Winner claims in the *News of the World*, rather implausibly, "but I'm writing this on a balcony overlooking a white, sandy beach and palm trees. The Caribbean Sea, with little white-topped waves, is rolling gently on to the sand. It is very hot..."

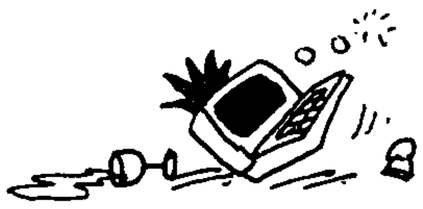
Not to be outdone, Jonathan Ross reveals in the *Sunday Times* that he is faxing his column from Florida. Even with all that sun, however, he can't raise much enthusiasm. "Christmas isn't what it used to be."

"What made Christmas special is in danger of disappearing," echoes Roger Rosewell of the *Mail on Sunday*. "Perhaps it's time we forgot about tradition and just called Christmas National Shopping Week... I seem to be forever queuing at checkouts..."

25 December: Peace reigns — except in the offices of those newspapers which, absurdly, insist on producing an edition for Boxing Day. What is there to report, apart from the Queen's speech? Funny you should mention it...

26 December: "I turned on the Queen's message at 9am on Radio 4 (so much more dignified than the televised version) and enjoyed the usual Christmas miracle," Libby Purves reports, in a lengthy space-filling exercise for the *Times*. "In an age of presentation and public relations, soundbites and spin, the high, flat delivery of the Queen falls like a blessed silence on the roaring, hooting motorway of the media."

27 December: A few more hacks are obliged to stagger into work — and they are none too happy about it. "I am still reeling from the departmental office Christmas party," Kate Battersby informs *Daily Telegraph* readers. "Why," demands Peter McKay in the London *Evening Standard*, "are Christmas hats all one size, medium? Surely they could be made multi-adjustable, like baseball caps..."



28 December: Still no word about the weather. Shome mishtake, shurely? Allan Massie, the Scots columnist for the *Daily Telegraph*, rectifies the omission: " 'So much,' I thought, as I chipped at four inches of ice on the horse-trough with the back of the log-splitting axe, 'for the global warming theorists who foretold wet, warm and windy winters.' There was not a breath of wind. The snow sparkled on the valley hills..." And so on, for another 1,000 words.

The *Times*'s Magnus Linklater, who boasts that he is "sending this column from the ice hell they call northern Scotland", matches Massie point for point. He has spent Christmas "shovelling snow slewed cars out of roadside drifts, applying boiling water to frozen windscreens... We have nursed freezing fingers and learnt the true meaning of the 'wind-chill factor'..."

29 December: Over to Peter Bradshaw of the *Evening Standard*. "Just two days to go before new year's eve" — thanks for the tip, Pete — "but however euphorically enjoyable your party is going to be, there is one terrible downer that must be confronted at the end of it all. And that, of course, is the wait for the minicab." Of course.

30 December: "I ate my Christmas lunch in France," Frank Johnson announces in the *Daily Telegraph*, carefully observing the golden rule. "It was turkey. It was delicious."

"The first new year's eve I was old enough to remember," Valerie Grove reminisces in the *Times*, "my parents went out to a party." Fancy!

Meanwhile, back to the weather. "A hard winter is a time to count the blessings it brings," the *Daily Mail*'s "top writer" Paul Johnson argues. "Making the first footprints in the virgin snow. Feeding hungry robins and sparrows in a snow-covered garden. Watching a little boy take his first sledge-ride down an icy hill. Or helping a little girl to build a snowman. Or piling the pine logs on a real, roaring wood fire, and roasting chestnuts in its glowing ashes. Or taking a puppy for its first adventure into the frozen wilds..." By some oversight, he neglects to mention raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens.

31 December: Apparently unaware that Paul Johnson has already cornered the market in nature notes, John Junor of the *Mail on Sunday* tries his hand. "With temperatures way below freezing there has been each morning this week an unceasing flurry of birds hungrily attacking the two containers of peanuts I put out for them... What would happen to them, I wondered, if people like myself did not feed them?" Yet another *Mail on Sunday* columnist, Jessica Davies, has an excitingly different angle: "This year I hung on until the last possible moment, hoping for a really irresistible invitation for tonight... So I am now having to throw my own new year's eve party instead." Perhaps she should invite Leanda de Lisle of the *Sunday Express*. "I'm flat broke after an orgy of present-buying," de Lisle wails. "Opening a bottle of champagne on the stroke of midnight will be an act of defiance rather than celebration. Let's party."

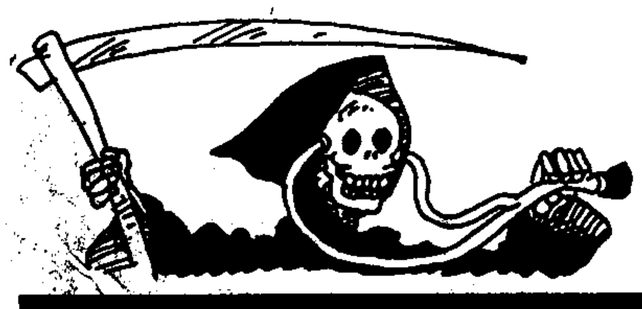
The *Observer*'s brilliant new columnist, Janet Street-Porter, follows Michael Winner's example by sending her dispatch from a beach in the Caribbean. "Goodbye 1995, a year that I won't be sorry to see the back of. It is ending, as it began, on the west coast of Jamaica..."

For some columnists, the struggle to fill their allotted space is simply too much. Peregrine Worsthorne, in the *Sunday Telegraph*, informs us that two friends of his went to Midnight Mass in St Paul's Cathedral; on Boxing Day, a neighbour complained when Worsthorne let off a few fireworks; and, er, that's it. "Cranking the brain into action is never easy after a holiday break," he explains, "but last week it was particularly uncooperative, as you may have begun to suspect when reading the preceding paragraphs... The St Paul's Cathedral bit and the Boxing Day drama were just about salvageable for columnar purposes, but unfortunately nothing else was." It is, he grumbles, a "lean columnar time of year".

Joan Smith of the *Independent on Sunday* is similarly afflicted. "I can bear Easter. I don't mind the occasional bank holiday. But Christmas and New Year combined? There's no getting away from the fact that we're talking columnists' hell here." After several hundred more words lamenting her lack of inspiration, she suddenly perks up: "Wait a minute — yes, at last I'm beginning to feel a subject coming on." Many Christmas rituals, it occurs to her, are "a sentimental Victorian invention". Well done!

3 January: Gradually emerging from their post-Hogmanay torpor, Fleet Street's finest are still scratching their heads for ideas. Here's Mary Kenny ("Britain's most incisive woman writer") in the *Daily Express*: "One of the great sociological puzzles of our time is why the British are so hostile to the hat. However low the temperature drops, however hard the blizzard blows, people are determined to walk around the streets in this country bare-headed..." And here's Lynda Lee-Potter of the *Daily Mail*: "The morning after Boxing Day bottle banks around the country resounded to the crashing of tons of empty festive bottles. There's a great satisfaction in hurling them into the darkness and hearing the crescendo of the din."

And so it is with journalism: there's a great satisfaction in producing tons of empty columns, hurling them into print — and then collecting a fat cheque. Let's party!



DOING THE ROUNDS

FORMER health minister and reformer Norman Fowler has woken up to pleas for more resources for his constituency casualty department at Birminghams Good Hope hospital.

"Staff are working flat out, responding heroically to unacceptable pressures. There are too few nurses for the number of cases they have to deal with, and many are going home exhausted and in tears at the end of the day."

Whether Sir Norman has managed to extend his argument to the rest of the NHS is unclear.

● EVEN health service managers are turning against the department of health now. "Health authorities and NHS trusts consider that a good deal of management time is spent collecting information that will have very little positive effect on improving services for patients," says a survey by the **National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts**.

Most trusts are also struggling to appoint doctors, with 70 percent of mental health trusts short of consultant psychiatrists and 65 percent of acute trusts minus a few anaesthetists. This despite the **NHS Executive**'s recent claim that there is no crisis in medical staffing.

Even those with staff are having trouble holding on to them. **Northern and Yorkshire** regional

● LAST year at **Bishop Auckland general hospital** in **County Durham**, a new £500,000 unit was built as part of a larger £27 million development project. This year it could be demolished if a rival £45 million bid for the work by a private consortium, **Health Care Development Advisory Ltd**, gets the nod.

Elsewhere the new private finance initiative rules continue to cause havoc with pre-existing hospital building schemes with 15 in **London** alone, worth just £565 million, suspended pending the arrival of a more expensive private bid.

● STAFF on duty at **Edinburgh Healthcare NHS Trust** over Christmas and new year had plenty to look forward to. The staff dining room was closed for Christmas Day, Boxing Day, new year's day director Liam Donaldson is particularly miffed: "When there is blatant poaching of staff from hospitals that puts their services in jeopardy, then I think competition has gone too far."

● The effect of staff shortages is well illustrated in **Darlington**. **County Durham health authority** has ordered **Darlington Memorial hospital** to balance its books by April, in line with DoH policy. The trust is already short of staff and £131,000 in debt, mainly due to a large increase in GP referrals and emergency admissions. The trust is now being forced into job losses and can't cope — but then neither can the GPs, who have a record number of unfilled vacancies. This sort of thing wouldn't be allowed to happen in Norman Fowler's constituency.

● SEVENTY-SEVEN NHS hospitals who use the **Allcare** and **Care-4-All** staff locum agencies are busy checking their books after the owner, Dr Dimitri Padelis, and three others were arrested pending possible charges of fraud. The alleged scams include confusion over billing, pay rates and payment of NI contributions totalling £3 million.

and 2 January, replaced by a delicious vending service. By way of compensation, staff were rewarded with a Christmas meal on 21 and 22 December (for £3 a head).

● AT **Winchester hospital**, a nurse was recently asked to do an extra shift on the intensive care unit to keep it open. Closure would have meant the nearest available bed would have been in **Inverness**. This follows two recent deaths elsewhere compounded by a lack of ICU beds.

● **BUPA's Health Direct** scheme, an attempt to muscle into the GP market, has been a resounding success in its pilot city of **Reading**. The service, which covers **Berkshire, South Oxfordshire** and **North Hampshire**, was launched last October in a blaze of publicity. "Our doctors are likely to be less harassed and give more time to patients," said spokesperson Sarah Stephens. How right she was. In the first month alone the scheme attracted just under 10 patients. That's more than one each for the seven GPs who have made the switch to private healthcare.

● AT **Hartlepool general hospital** the volunteers' shop looks set to close after management demands for it to stay open 12 hours a day, seven days a week. The volunteers, whose service has provided thousands of pounds for essential equipment over 22 years, cant get the staff to cover the shifts.

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

FOR the first time in 14 years, Whipps Cross casualty department was closed to some admissions in December. Psychotic patients seeking emergency psychiatric treatment at the Maudsley hospital are waiting hours to be seen, and some have been sent as far as **Northampton** for a bed.

M.D.

DOWN ON THE FARM

FOR the fourth year running, farming incomes soared in the UK last year. They rose by more than 30 per cent compared with the previous year, bringing the industry's total income to more than £4 billion.

But not all farmers are winners. The gains are mainly in the arable sector as the "barley barons" benefit from the double whammy of increases in European Union subsides and in cereal prices. Livestock farmers, meanwhile — especially in the subsidy-free pig and poultry sectors — have been badly hit by rising feed prices, mainly due to the greater expense of the cereal components. They expect further price-hikes later in the year in excess of 20 per cent.

The immediate reason for soaring prices is last year's disastrous harvest in the United States. Even without that, however, long-term world demand is strong, having already reached 215 million tonnes and rising. Yet production is nearly static at 183 million tonnes, which even bumper harvests could not increase significantly.

But while global competition for an increasingly scarce commodity is forcing prices up, the noble and wise EU has its answer ready. It is continuing with its "set-aside" policy: paying already subsidy-rich farmers more than £300 a hectare to tend weeds on 12 per cent of fertile arable land, or to grow "industrial" crops such as oil seed rape which cannot be used for human or animal feed.

Thus, having paid billions to create grain mountains when there was a world surplus, the EU is now paying out even more taxpayers' money to cut back production when there is a world shortage. 'Nuff said about the ingenuity of this wonderful organisation.

ONE thing that eases the burden of livestock farmers is the continuing low level of sterling. It has been free to float after Britain was bounced so decisively out of the ERM in September 1992.

Since then progressive devaluations have improved exports which are at record levels and set to rise further, making up for sluggish domestic demand. Even UK "barley barons" benefit. Their subsidies under the common agricultural policy (CAP) are calculated in ECUs, so every time the pound devalues their subsidy cheques increase.

It would thus be in the interest of agriculture as a whole to maintain the status quo, keeping the pound competitive and steering well clear of the threatened EU monetary union, proposed by 1997. But, by the complicated rules of the CAP, the weakness of the pound which has boosted UK farming incomes reduces those of farmers in stronger currency areas. German and Dutch farmers are particularly angry about their losses and are pressing their own governments — which fund a substantial part of the CAP — to push for its dismantling.

Realising this could bring the EU gravy train to a halt, David Naish, erstwhile president of the National Farmers Union (NFU), has suddenly taken fright. Despite the financial benefits of independence he is pushing for monetary union at any cost — anything to keep the gravy train rolling.

While this will keep the "barley barons" happy, on the basis that any subsidy is better than none at all, it will leave livestock sectors high and dry. Small wonder so many farmers translate NFU as No Fucking Use.

FEW in the trade will disagree that much of the responsibility for the pre-Christmas BSE scare was down to the ministry of agriculture and its inept public relations.

A singular contribution to this cock-up was the extraordinary conduct of the Maffia's chief vet, Keith "Victor" Meldrum, who demanded TV cameras be turned off rather than answer simple questions on BSE.

Not content with destroying the pre-Christmas beef trade, the Maffia has also imposed more rigorous — and expensive — controls on certain offals from adult cattle and extended the range of these offals. This has added up to £7 in disposal costs for each animal slaughtered. For some slaughterhouses cumulative costs will now exceed annual net profits.

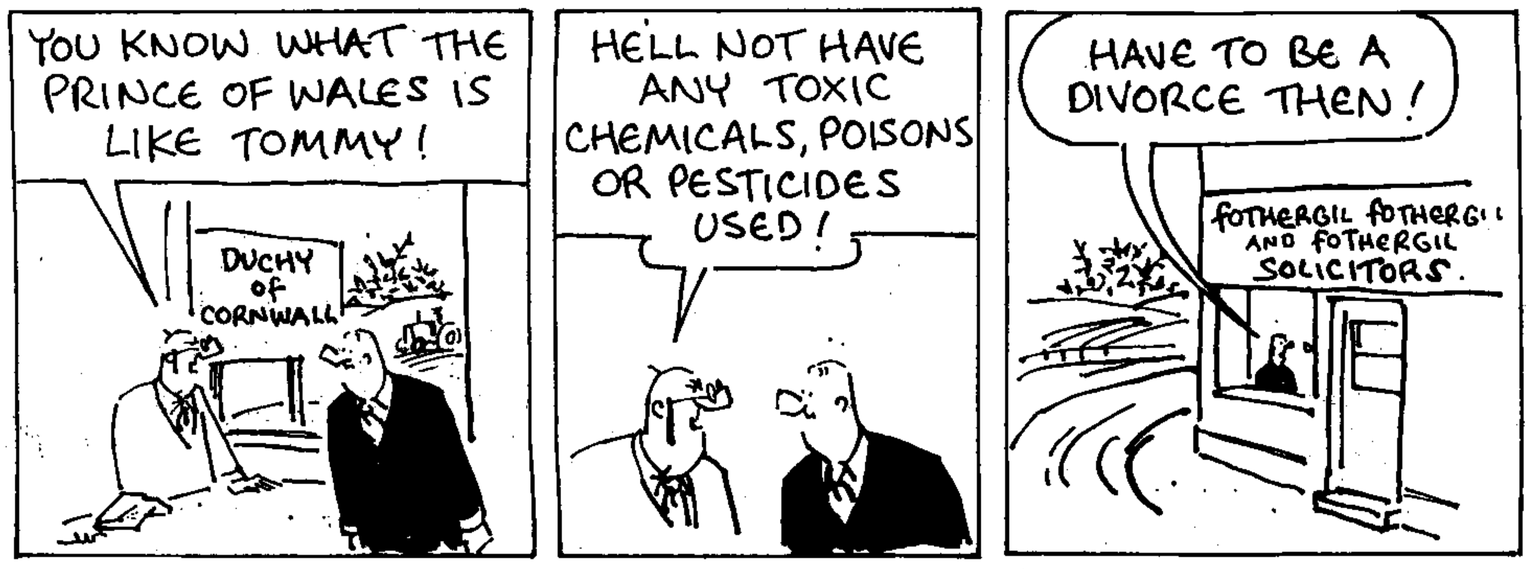
As if this were not enough, the Maffia now proposes to charge for the policing of the new controls. Despite their being unnecessary if there is no BSE risk to humans and inadequate if there is, the Maffia claims that enforcement is a "service" which benefits the industry "by providing the public with necessary assurances". Thus, it asserts, the industry should pay for the "service".

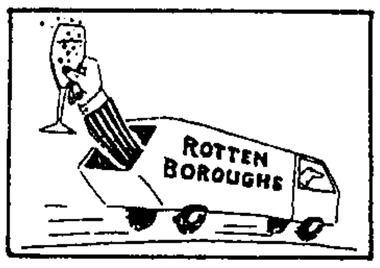
Since "assurances" have been singularly ineffective and were only necessary in the first place because of the Maffia's lamentable treatment of the whole BSE issue, the meat industry is thinking about sharpening its knives with a view to its own enforcement — of a Maffia-free zone.

'New Muckspreader'

Old Macdonald

ALBERT


YOU KNOW WHAT THE PRINCE OF WALES IS LIKE TOMMY!
DUCHY OF CORNWALL
HE'LL NOT HAVE ANY TOXIC CHEMICALS, POISONS OR PESTICIDES USED!
HAVE TO BE A DIVORCE THEN!
FOTHERGIL FOTHERGIL AND FOTHERGIL SOLICITORS.



Rotten Borough Advertiser

BRUM'S LABOUR OF HATE

THE gloom that normally surrounds the city has been temporarily lifted by a set of poison-pen portraits rubbishing the council's 75 Labour councillors.

It is working its way round the town hall under the heading: "nominations for the post of assistant chief whip". Some of the portraits are downright libellous. One councillor is accused of being a "right-wing racist and gypsy hater"; another of keeping his "numerous south Birmingham wimmin in line by physical violence if necessary; for which he is to be commended".

While other "portraits" play the racist card more sharply: one councillor is accused of having "5 wives, 17 children, 23 houses and 147 urban renewal grants", most entries are more frivolous.

For instance Coun John Chapman "talks to plants — they don't listen either"; Mike Leddy is "so wooden he once had a part as an extra in *Crossroads*"; Mick Rice is a "disreputable reptilian low-life wheeler dealer"; and leader Theresa Stewart "badly in-need of a hair-do and a Laura Ashley dress".

So who wrote the scurrilous seven-page document? Most portraits are so accurate councillors suspect that it is an inside job. Stewart, meanwhile, has called on the author(s) to own up and apologise in front of the entire Labour group. She is in for a long wait...

IN BRIEF

LAMBETH: Ofsted, the government education watchdog, says standards are so pisspoor that every Lambeth school will receive a full inspection — a first in local government. Education department staff have also been digesting a memo from personnel manager Gilly Webb warning that fraud will not be tolerated and dismissal will follow for those caught. Oh yeah? In 1994, 740 staff were found to be claiming benefits they were not entitled to, yet action was taken against only 100. Webb's warning is also causing merriment because her live-in partner, finance director Gary Moss, has been suspended since March pending a disciplinary hearing.

HULL: Labour's Dennis Woods, a former mayor and chair of the local council-owned telephone company, faces four charges of fiddling his expenses. "I've known about it for six months," he finally admitted when Hull's Labour leaders, who have a commanding lead and have patronised Woods since July, were unable to hush the case up any longer. Why wasn't Woods suspended from the Labour group like any lowly member of staff would have been until his innocence was demonstrated? Surely not because Woods is a close lieutenant of council leader Pat Doyle, whose position in Hull Labour group is shaky, and Doyle has needed every vote he could get over the last few months?

IN THE LIBRARY

BARNSLEY council has cut opening hours at three libraries to save £20,000 a year — having just spent £6,000 on three Christmas parties for councillors and chums at the town hall. Revellers at a do for 200 were taxied home in the mayoral cars THE 1 and THE 2. Then there was Christmas lunch for 100; and then a booze-up for 150 councillors, officers and Labour party branch members with council leader Jeff Ennis. Oh, and council fat cats can look forward to a £4,000 pay rise. As the chief librarian said: "We have had to look at ways to save money in the library service because of severe restrictions in spending."

HAVEN'T A CLWYD...

MORE trouble for the Welsh Development Agency (WDA), which bragged that the St Asaph business park in Clwyd, north Wales, would create 2,000 jobs when it was built with taxpayers' money.

So far it has attracted five firms, not all of them a success. One of them, for example, was X Eagle — a computer company that took the WDA grants and cheap premises and then did a moonlight flit.

The firm disappeared from the industrial park owing £32,000 to Colwyn borough council in unpaid business rates and an undisclosed amount in rent to the WDA. Its leased computer equipment also vanished, and police investigations established that one of its directors had done a runner to Italy.

Colwyn council has written off the debt because it cannot locate the directors. Luckily for X Eagle it had not defaulted on poll tax payments: in the past the borough council has used bailiffs to track down non-payers and then had them jailed for owing as little as £200.

There is one ex-director of X Eagle, however, who may be able to help Welsh taxpayers recoup some of their losses: Philip Eyton-Jones. He knows how councils operate, having been director of planning, architecture and estates at Clwyd county council until March 1995.

ALL VERY (S)AD-SHOP

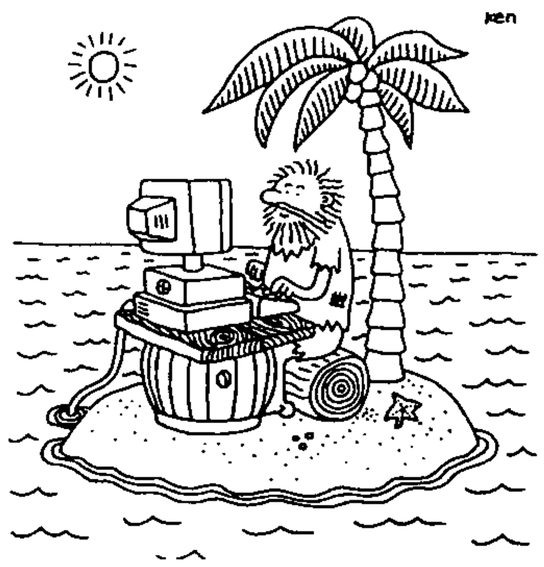
THE imminent release of a report into how Bent council's "Ad Shop" advertising department blew £400,000 of taxpayers' money on booze and junkets, drawn up by former police superintendent Derek Owen, promises to give the council an unhappy new year.

The report pinpoints blame on former Ad Shop manager Ruth Jackson and her then lover Coun Richard Buckley. He was chairman of the council's corporate management board responsible for overseeing the council's 180 "business" units.

The report claims: "The relationship between Cllr Buckley and Ruth Jackson was a clear and substantial non-pecuniary interest. When warning signs of stresses and strains began to appear they were ignored or simply cemented over... and led to abuses of expenditure which went on unabated."

Part of this "abuse of expenditure" included £23,843 spent on lunches (the Kaefeng Kosher Oriental in Hendon); piss-ups in St Albans and, as revealed in the *Eye* last year, a trip to Amsterdam's Schipol Airport for a one-hour meeting and a three-hour lunch in a smart restaurant at a cost of £1,428.

Despite Brent being primed for business and profit-making it took the council ages to discover anything amiss. In July 1994 chief executive Charles Wood described the Ad Shop as the "flag ship of the business units" — a flagship well on its way to losing a lot of money.



"... e-mail to castaway@d.island.co.south.sea"

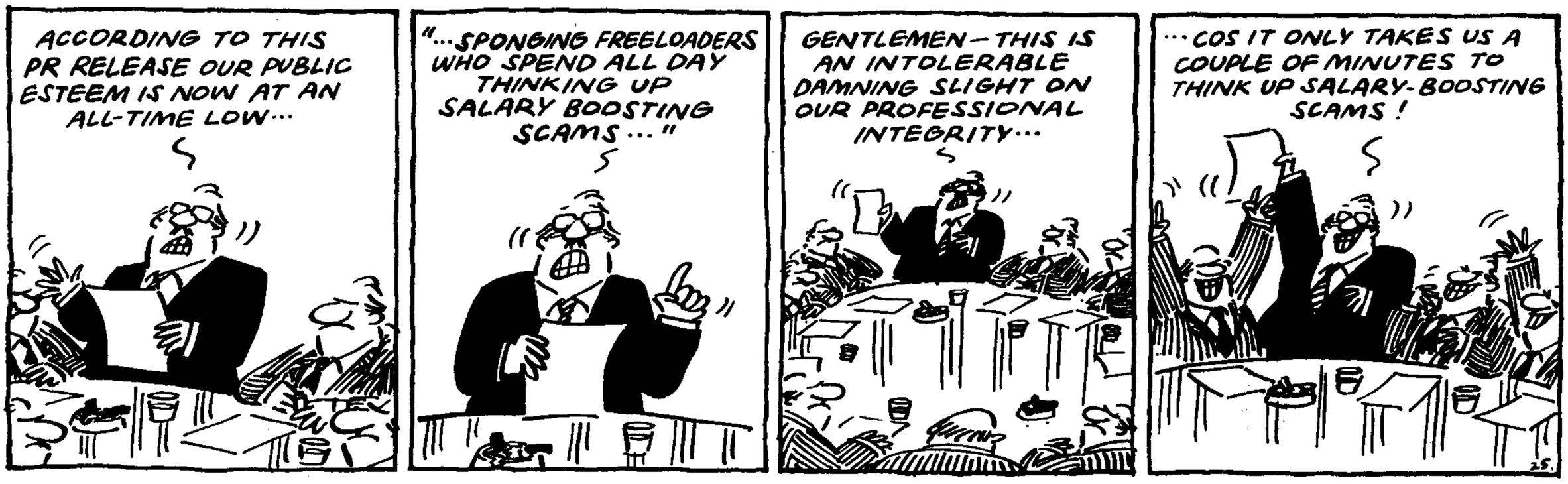
Meanwhile Ad Shop staff have received handsome redundancy payoffs and Jackson is at home coping with mental fatigue associated with alcoholism (not helped, no doubt, by so many Ad Shop binges). As for Buckley, his position on the council is secure for now: the Tories rely on the mayor's casting vote for control and a by-election would result in a Labour victory and seizure of power. The Ad Shop affair is now being referred to the district auditor who may be forced to surcharge those responsible.

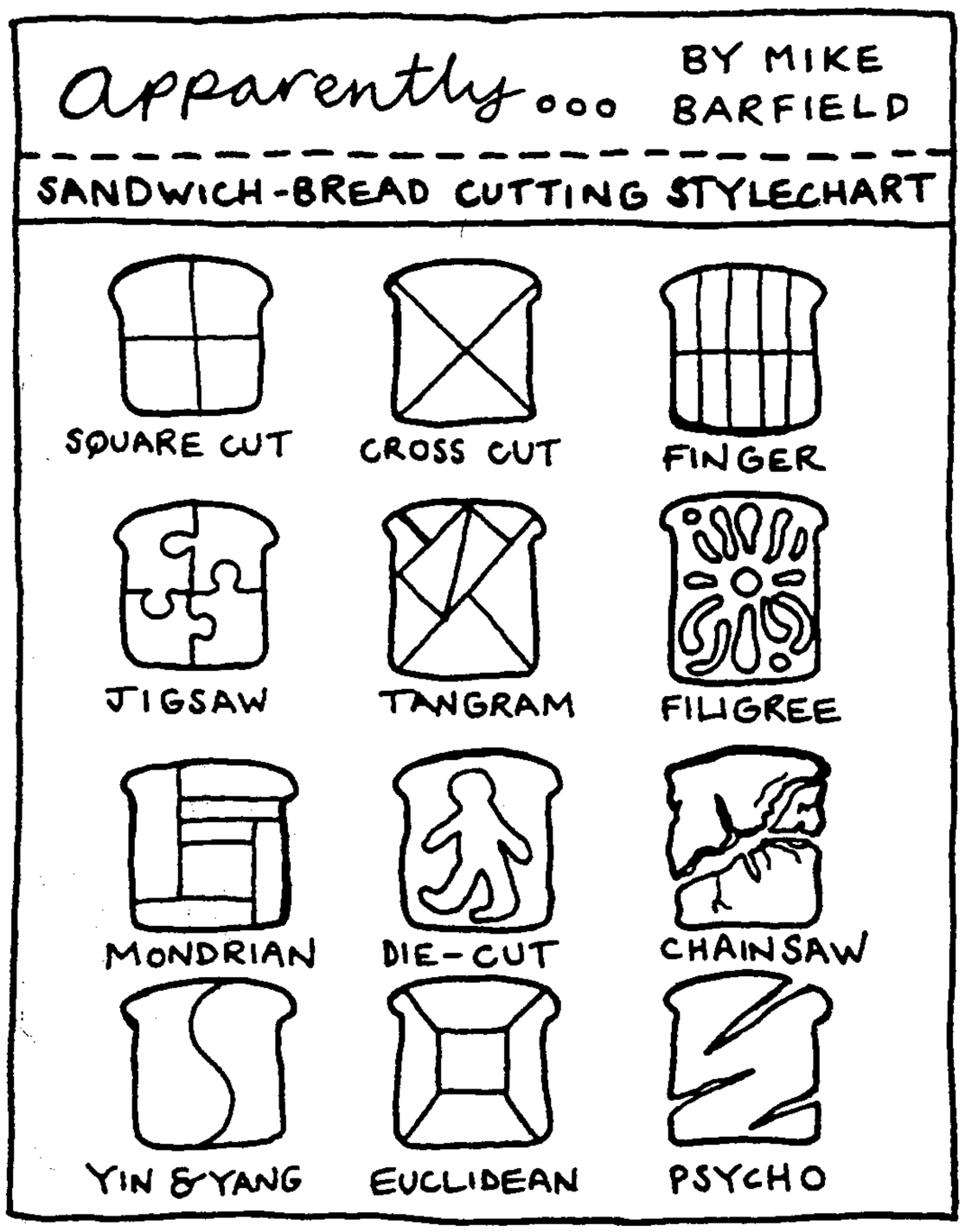
RED FACE OF THE WEEK

WHEN the socialist republic of Harlow launched a Christmas drink-driving campaign, Dermot Byrne, chief executive of the council, was particularly ardent. That was until he was pulled over by police on 20 December and found to be driving while four times over the limit. In court the next day Byrne's lawyer said Byrne was receiving counselling for a drink problem. Judgment was deferred until the middle of this month.

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE


ACCORDING TO THIS PR RELEASE OUR PUBLIC ESTEEM IS NOW AT AN ALL-TIME LOW...
"...SPONGING FREELOADERS WHO SPEND ALL DAY THINKING UP SALARY BOOSTING SCAMS..."
GENTLEMEN — THIS IS AN INTOLERABLE DAMNING SLIGHT ON OUR PROFESSIONAL INTEGRITY...
...COS IT ONLY TAKES US A COUPLE OF MINUTES TO THINK UP SALARY-BOOSTING SCAMS!



LIBEL UPDATE

IN HIS old age, poor old Peter Carter-Fuck seems to blunder from one disaster to another.

Fresh from representing David Ashby MP in his lawsuit against the *Sunday Times* (a case which most sane solicitors would have implored Ashby not to pursue), and a string of other well-publicised high court defeats, Carter-Fuck decided to send a letter to Fleet Street editors on behalf of Prince Charles's righthand woman, the sensibly-named Tiggy Legge-Bourke.

"Reports have reached her and her family that a series of malicious lies are circulating in the press which are a gross reflection on our client's character," he warned. "These allegations are utterly without the slightest foundation. I have advised our client to draw your attention to the baselessness of these allegations so that they may be erased from circulation and prevent the risk of finding their way into the newspapers."

Actually no newspaper had been planning to run "lies" or "baseless allegations" about the leggy berk. But the letter gave them just the excuse they needed: the *Daily Mirror* splashed it all over the front page, revealing that "angry Tiggy Legge-Bourke has called in the lawyers to stifle jibes about her relationship with Prince Charles". Carter-Fuck's intervention, which was supposed to prevent any publicity about Tiggy and the prince, thus had exactly the opposite effect. Another triumph for the world's greatest libel lawyer!

SCHEDULED to start in the high court is a libel action brought by former *Sun* editor and Sky Television md Kelvin McKenzie against *Business Age*, the weekly magazine published by Tom Rubython.

While McKenzie has eccentrically retained Frank Presland, the Frere Cholmeley solicitor who acted for Elton John against the *Sun*, *Business Age*'s solicitor, David Price, who acted for Michael Foot against the *Sunday Times*, will be assuming the role of advocate for his client — the first time a solicitor has so performed in a full-dress libel trial.

The nub of McKenzie's claim is that he deserves damages for loss of reputation arising from an article which alleged he had been sacked from Sky by Rupert Murdoch. The reason for this, according to the article, was that he had blown an exclusive deal with Frank Maloney, the manager of boxer Lennox Lewis, thus costing Sky £20 million in potential revenues. McKenzie claims he was not sacked but resigned.

Various Sky persons have been subpoenaed to give evidence, so the *Eye* has been informed. Step forward, perhaps, Sam Chisholm, Sky's chief executive and McKenzie's chief detractor to Murdoch...

WATER ROUND-UP

WHILE burst water mains have flooded homes and left consumers facing shortages, the privatised companies have wrung their hands over circumstances leading to these latest disasters.

What they have kept quiet about, however, are the dire consequences for consumers with water meters who must pay for the water that has leaked.

Under the water industry act of 1991 the water company must repair the first leak from a new meter and pay for the water lost.

In a recent court case in Torquay consumer Anthony May scored a victory over South West Water having said that SWW overcharged him when his newly installed meter leaked. The water company offered £45 for the water lost — but the court ordered SWW to pay back nearly £500 instead.

The most worrying aspect of the case is that the water company would *not* have had to pay Mr May back under the water industry act if it had been his second leak. Chances of the quality of meters improving and thus removing the possibility of leaks seem remote: the weights and measures office which once tested meters has just been replaced by industry self-regulation.

Meanwhile on the south coast Christmas cheer was provided by the Folkestone and District Water Company, which sent out a leaflet headed "Good news" — a reminder that the water supply from external pipes into a consumer's house was the consumer's responsibility.

With the remote possibility of burst pipes "customers" were advised to get insurance. The good news was that if corroded pipes caused a problem, the water company, through the Home Service Scheme, could provide an insurance service at £45 a year — a little extra income for the water company with which to mend all its corroded pipes.

Over at disaster-ridden Yorkshire Water, chairman Sir Gordon Jones has announced his early retirement, though no doubt he will be handsomely rewarded by the company's ever-generous remuneration committee. Before he goes, he will oversee Yorkshire's bid to supply water to the half million residents of York in Ontario. Canadian readers should start stocking up on bottled water now.

Finally, to show that good work in the water industry does not go unrewarded, the new year's honours list included an MBE for Darminder Singh Chadha, principal water resources planner for the National Rivers Authority in Northumbria and, er, drought-ravaged Yorkshire. Have a drink on us...

ELECTRIC SHOCK

ELECTRICITY regulator Stephen Littlechild has finally accepted defeat in trying to get rid of the billion-pounds-a-year subsidy for nuclear power, which adds 10 per cent to everybody's bill.

As parliament rose for Christmas he announced that the levy, which he had hoped to phase out, ought really to rise by nearly half to 14.5 per cent. However, an arrangement had been made to spread out Nuclear Electric's debts and so it would continue at 10 per cent until the debt had been cleared.

The bitter professor's privatisation plan was founded on the belief that the market could do the job best. Cecil Parkinson, when energy minister, promised that the levy would be shown separately on bills so the public knew how much extra they were paying. That promise was soon broken on the preposterous ground that it was too difficult to calculate.

Successive ministers and Littlechild also promised that the subsidy would be reduced every year until it vanished. Littlechild even had an angry clash in 1992 when he told Nuclear Electric to hurry up. Its chief executive, Dr Bob Hawley, said the company would be making a profit without the levy by 1995. Instead, the demands of nuclear power have remained insatiable.

Nuclear Electric, relieved of its older power stations which will become a charge on the taxpayer, is due to be sold in the autumn if enough mugs can be found in the City. As an inducement it has promised not to build any more nuclear power stations — the first time a privatised industry has promised nil growth. Why doesn't it go the whole hog and simply twin with Chernobyl?

HUSBAND

Sinatra marathon

NEW YORK: Radio station WQEW-AM will mark Frank Sinatra's 800th birthday today with the climax of an 81-hour marathon in which it has played consecutively virtually every song he ever recorded.

Birmingham Post & Mail

SIGNAL FAILURES

THE year in which passengers will allegedly enjoy even better services as a result of privatisation of Railtrack and several train operating companies began with a long trek home for "customers" at Chichester.

One fragment of BR, South Wales and West Railways, had decided to run a normal Monday service on new year's day but had not bothered telling Railtrack or the official train inquiry offices. Network SouthCentral, the main operator in Sussex, was meanwhile running a Sunday service. Passengers who had been given wrong information by the inquiry bureaus turned up at Chichester for the last Sunday train to Portsmouth — which was not running because it is a South Wales and West service.

"No one seemed to bother about the fact that people were stranded," reads the Railtrack log book. "Stranded passengers were left to make their own way home, neither NSC or South Wales and West Railways were prepared to accept responsibility for them."

EVIDENCE has emerged of another way safety may be adversely affected in the fragmented and litigation-led rail system devised by John Major and his army of consultants and lawyers.

Until now a driver who suspects his train may be on fire or falling to bits has had no qualms about stopping the train and getting it examined. On today's railway, however, his company will have to pay compensation to Railtrack if train failure results in delays and inconvenience to other litigious rail businesses.

Compensation will be demanded even if the train was stopped for safety reasons. However strenuously the rail businesses deny that safety will be undermined, the compensation culture will inevitably provide an incentive for drivers to keep going with fingers crossed if they suspect a fault.

MORE than a year after the opening of the Channel tunnel "Great" Britain still has nothing up and running beyond a basic Eurostar service from London and some freight trains which can be accommodated on Victorian infrastructure.

The latest farce on the British side is the lack of preparation by Railtrack for the new electric locomotives built to carry Channel tunnel freight around Britain. Costing £2.25 million apiece, these engines are equipped with all the latest electronic wizardry — so it is hardly surprising they aren't allowed to pull trains on the West Coast line to Glasgow which employs 1950s electrical technology and is still not being modernised because of government ideology and meanness.

Even worse, the 46 new locos are not even allowed to run between Folkestone and London because they would interfere with the signalling systems. The relatively quiet line between Ashford and Tonbridge was electrified and partly rebuilt a few years ago to accommodate Channel tunnel freight trains, but even that route is not ready for the new locos. Instead Railtrack is belatedly preparing the busy line through Maidstone — already host to Eurostars and heavy commuter traffic — to carry all the Channel tunnel freight. The latest suggestion is that the Tonbridge route may never be upgraded, despite the work put into it at a time when other parts of Britain were crying out for upgrading resources which were swallowed up in pre-Channel tunnel work.

Again comparison with France is embarrassing and humiliating. *Modern Railways* magazine reported that serious consideration was being given to cutting losses arising from £150 million worth of idling locomotives by using them extensively on French railways, which it seems are already capable of handling them.

'Dr B. Ching'

790 Motor Schools

LEARN TO DRIVEL With South Bristols most Successfull Instructor. Intensive Course from £115.

Bristol Evening Post

Letters

Private Eye

Man of action

Sir,

I read your mighty organ's account of the fracas at my favourite restaurant Giovanni's with ever increasing outrage. Just what has happened to standards at the EYE*? The story (apart from the bit about Portillo and Lilley) was almost wholly accurate and hence unactionable. What on earth is the point of appearing on your esteemed pages unless I can sue? For heaven's sake, be less careful in future.*

JERRY HAYES MP,
House of Commons, SW1.

A Meral issue

Sir,

I refer to your piece "Bad times... for Meral Ece..." I was brought into 96 by your fictional allegations, where you failed to even get the "English law" right.

As a busy public servant, as well as a mother of three children, I'm devoting 15 minutes to spell out the facts (yes as much as that).

1 My partner does not owe the amount you mentioned, for the simple reason that he vacated the said flat and moved out of the borough 2½ years before the council took possession and relet the flat. This was in 1987/88, some three years before I even knew him.

Even if he did owe money, I am certainly not liable. You state that under "English law" a spouse is liable for "her husband's debts". Having consulted an eminent "English" barrister, I can confirm that you are completely wrong.

Have you taken to receiving legal advice from Iranian fundamentalist lawyers?

2) My partner is not under the spotlight. The Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign was funded to help asylum seekers, refugees and widely supported by hundreds of local and national organisations, including Hackney's local MPs.

His claim was merely that he was entitled to a redundancy payment after nine years of employment. According to English law anybody made to lose their job is entitled to a redundancy. It is normal practice to ensure that organisations receive adequate winding-down grants to meet their liabilities. The figure of £10,000 allegedly demanded is bogus, and this case goes back to 1992-3, before I was elected.

3) Your extraordinary assertion that I've formed an alliance with another councillor (yes all two of us) to oust the present leader is news to me.

Finally, Ken Ostler's memo is inaccurate: my partner does not owe poll tax as he did not live in Hackney in the period referred to.

I have neither met, nor have an opinion of Ken Ostler.

This is obviously a pathetic and futile attempt to smear a local councillor (what's new?) and I'm surprised that you considered that it merited five inches of column space in your organ.

Yours sincerely,
COUNCILLOR MERAL ECE,
Deputy Leader, Hackney Council.

Economic growth

Sir,

In view of Andrew Neill's recent spoutings on the running of the economy (SUNSET TIMES)*, I was wondering if perhaps there exists any photographic evidence of him embracing an Asian model in an attempt to stimulate growth.*

If so maybe you could be kind enough to share it with the public.

Yours,
CHRIS J.S. BOAS,
Via e-mail.

Nit pickings

Sir,

Your ROTTEN BOROUGH *item on Strathclyde (29 December) has caused a certain amount of headscratching in the "Labour region".*

It is true — as ROTTEN BOROUGH *has pointed out before — that our loan fund has the power to borrow up to 10 percent of the pension fund for short periods without consulting its members. Indeed, a sum (not £25 million) was borrowed last year on 31 March — and paid back, with interest, on 3 April.*

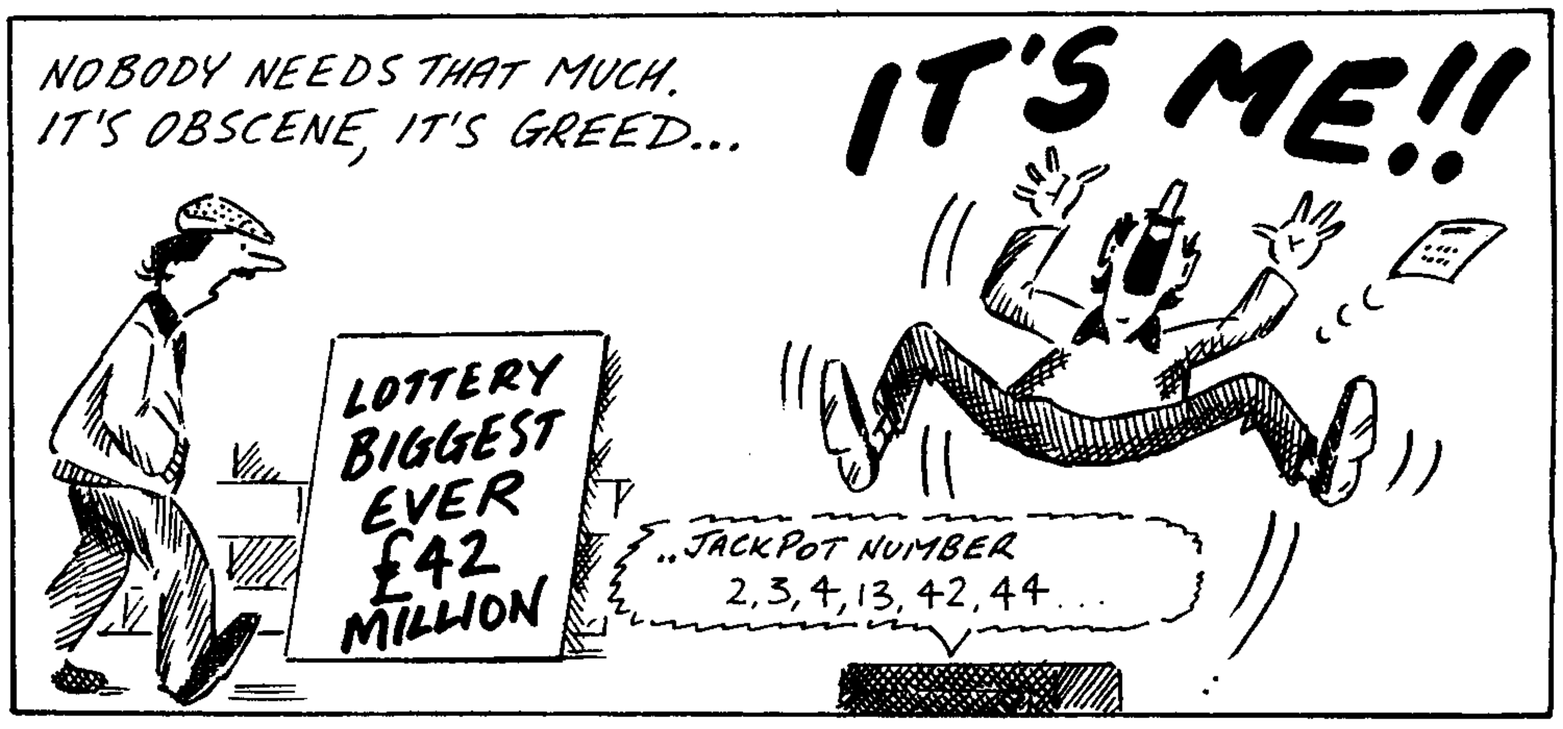
It is also true that the region's capital assets (massively under-estimated at £277 million) will be divided among the 12 new single-tier councils and other bodies which take over Strathclyde's responsibilities on 1 April. What else would be done with them?

As to the "jolly farewell party", costing you say £600,000, we would be happy to hear where and when it is being held so that we can gatecrash!

Yours,
JOHN BROWN,
Head of Public Relations, Strathclyde Regional Council.

The Lottery Winners

TURNER



I-SPY

Paddy Ashdown at home

Submitted by Richard Boxer. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Out of data information

Sir,

Sorry to spoil a sexy story, but your COMPUTER NEWS *article on Microsoft and* MAXIM *magazine was, basically, not entirely correct.*

1 When Steve Jones (or any other reader) completed the survey on his CD Rom, he was not calling Microsoft at all. All replies came straight to Dennis Publishing via our telephone services supplier Broadsystem. No mystery here.

2 The software used to run the electronic reader survey was not developed by Microsoft, but by an unrelated, independent developer named Everflow. Dennis deal directly with Everflow.

3 The Everflow software is designed to capture the data supplied by the reader, and only that data. It can also identify the software applications the host computer is running. However, the reader can delete all this information from the survey if he so wishes. Sadly, the software is not technically capable of interrogating the files on the reader's computer. Oh, that it were (joke).

4 Having spoken to Mr Jones, I learn that he has not made any complaint to the data protection registrar and, worse, is still a reader of MAXIM.

Happy computing.
ERIC FULLER,
Publishing Director, Maxim (Dennis Publishing Ltd).

Sir,

*Recent letters by Lionel Shapiro and Andrew Ircha (*EYE *888) show up just how much confusion exists regarding Modem Snooping.*

Mr Shapiro says that "the last thing that one's computer/modem knows or needs to know is its own phone number"; and Mr Ircha says "As far as I am aware no software is able to ascertain the phone number of a line a modem is plugged into..."

The fact is that systems do very often know their own phone numbers, especially if they have (as is very common now) fax software installed. If users of the very popular WinFax software would care to look at the file WFXCFG.DAT they will find, in plain text, their fax (and possibly voice) phone numbers stored so that their system can send that little note of the sender's number that you find on top of most faxes. Other fax software I understand uses a similar system.

It wouldn't take the cleverest programmer in the world to add a little routine during registration of software to say "Look to see if WinFax is installed and, if so, grab WFXCFG.DAT and send it too" — not of course that any reputable software company would do such a thing!

NEIL HARRIS,
Cardiff.

Sky line

Sir,

Your TV reviewer, Mr Eyes, is most unkind about Sky TV's monopoly coverage of the England cricket tour to South Africa, and their loss of commentator Geoff Boycott to the BBC. He appears to have forgotten that until Sky came along, the BBC never covered overseas tours anyway, and that it was Sky who discovered Boycott's commentating skills in the first place. I'm more than happy to pay a few quid for wall-to-wall cricket. Leave that nice Mr Murdoch alone.

Yours,
HARRY THOMPSON,
London.

Dreadful boob

Sir,

Not only is your cover of 29 December not funny it is also sexist.

Yours fraternally,
KEITH FLETT,
Convenor Tottenham Committee of Public Safety.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Once he'd gone past the point of no return, there was no going back."
COMMENTATOR, BBC1
(Simon Young)

"This run of 24 games without defeat... must be like a millstone on your shoulders."
TONY GUBBA, BBC
(Dave Abbott)

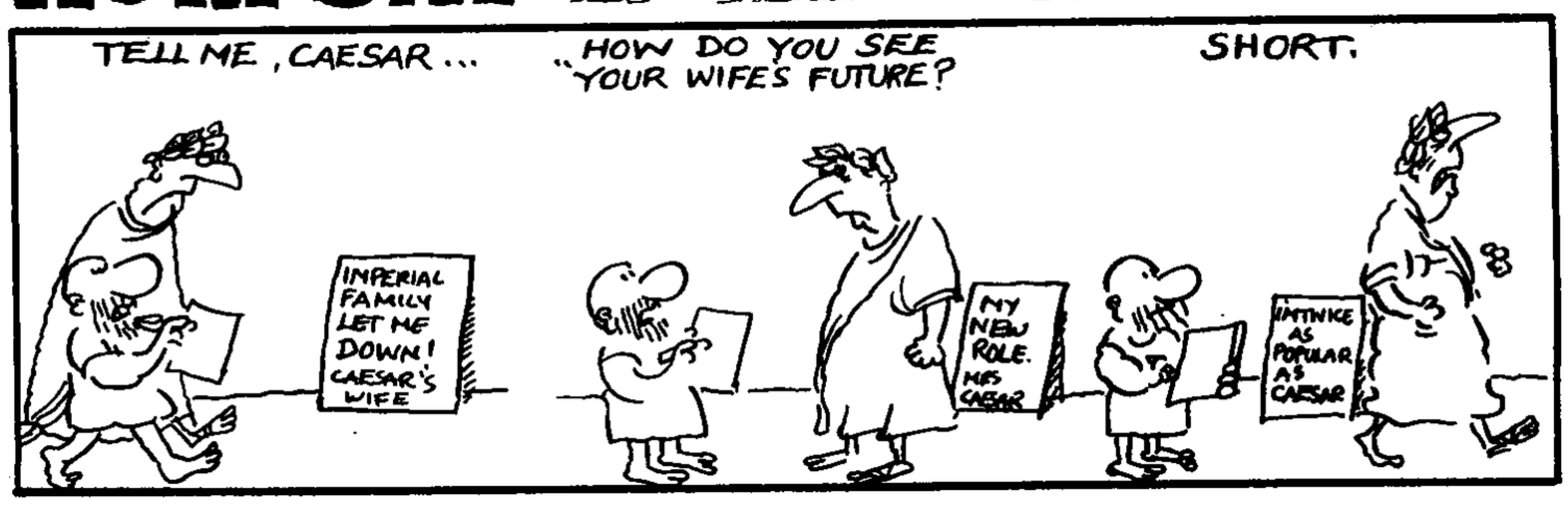
"I've been up and down so many times that I feel as if I'm in a revolving door."
CHER, Channel 4
(D.A. Young)

Dennis Pennis: *Have you ever thought of writing your autobiography?*
Chris Eubank: *On what?*
The Sunday Show, BBC2
(Francis Harvey)

Reporter: *I am standing outside The Bicycle Shop with the owner. So tell me — what do you sell?*
Owner: *Eh, bicycles...*
Radio Forth
(Cameron McVean)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN


TELL ME, CAESAR...
"HOW DO YOU SEE YOUR WIFE'S FUTURE?
SHORT.
IMPERIAL FAMILY LET ME DOWN! CAESAR'S WIFE
MY NEW ROLE. MRS CAESAR
IMPINKE AS POPULAR AS CAESAR

Letter from **Riyadh**
from Our Own Correspondent

MUCH adulterated goats' milk was being swigged here last week as those of our leaders who are not too fat to stand up were doing the Al-Saud victory jig.

Mighty Albion had been humbled, reduced from its knees to its belly and made to rewrite its own laws, making a mockery of its stand against Saddam Hussein and in favour of Salman Rushdie. The land which once tried to trick us of our black gold in exchange for worthless beads now pays homage — and offers opposition leader Muhammed Al-Massari's head on a plate of Caribbean beans from the Windward Islands!

For us it's an old fashioned British Ealing comedy; for you, I fear, more of a tragedy.

The thought of Al-Massari beached, the only Muslim in Dominica, with no one to pray with and surrounded by the staple diet of the island — pigs — has produced hurricanes of flatulent laughter from our royal Borgias. Indeed, rumour has it that King Fahd actually died laughing, but like El Cid has been strapped to his latest mount for the maintenance of appearances.

Laughing too, all the way to the bank, are your merchants of death — oops, sorry, your British exporters — free again to stuff our bloated armouries with more guns and gas than we have either the men or the stomach to use — except of course on unarmed local civilians.

Selling arms to Arab dictators never really goes out of fashion in Blighty, it seems; it's just that like Saddam, some tyrants go in and out of vogue.

Meanwhile the grisly dance around the corpulent corpse of the playboy king continues, with family daggers plunging into the fleshy backs of the brothers royal. The Sudairi seven — the full brothers of the king — despise Crown Prince Abdullah, not least because his mother was another of their father's vast number of wives and concubines.

But more importantly they hate him because he's straight. He's more at home in the desert than the casinos and bordellos of Europe; and more comfortable with a falcon on his arm than a "young friend". The Sudairis desperately need to keep Fahd alive: for as long as he is alive, Abdullah remains only Regent and subject to collegiate control.

They are trying to weaken Abdullah sufficiently that if they really have to have him on Fahd's throne then he will accept one of them — Sultan, the defence minister and architect of the British capitulation — as his crown prince. Sultan will then support Abdullah much as the rope supports the hanging man.

The US is backing Sultan not least because he signs the military procurement cheques. Besides, they are nervous of Abdullah who is altogether too Arab and too Muslim for them — and his favourite wife is a Syrian to boot!

One man petrified by all the backstabbing is the 20-stone Saudi ambassador in London, a one-time doggerel writer, Ghazi Alghosebi, whose planning application to build a vast Roman-style swimming pool complex in the garden of his listed residence was recently humiliatingly rejected by a London council.

Alghosebi has had a dog's life of late: a pet of the Sudairis, he has been cruelly berated by them for his failure to silence Al-Massari in London. Now he must wait, hang-dog, for the medical bulletins concerning his master Fahd. But his real problem is that he is bitterly disliked by Crown Prince Abdullah, who, once freed from current constraints, may not merely recall the fat poodle but may send him somewhere appropriate — the cell prepared for Muhammed Al-Massari, perhaps?

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

● "THIS is all new to me," said Chief Justice Yong Pung How, as he passed judgement in the Central Criminal Court in Singapore. "It is not uncommon for prisoners to appeal against the length of their sentence, but there is no legal precedent for the case currently before me. I've never had a prisoner ask me to *increase* the length of their sentence."

The Chief Justice went on: "Rozlan Othman, 25, has been convicted of drugs offences. He received a three-month sentence for resisting arrest, after he was detained on suspicion of having consumed drugs. But near the end of his sentence, he wrote to me saying that he had resolved to become a better person, and thought a longer time in jail would help him to reform and turn over a new leaf. Doctors have certified that he is completely sane so, using my powers under the Criminal Procedure Code, I hereby increase his sentence to life imprisonment. I understand that another man called Gruber is also involved. I want them split up and put in different cells. Next case." *(Straits Times, 8 November 1995. Spotter — Brendan Joseph)*

—●—

● "I HAVE seldom encountered the like of this in my entire career," Justice Tom Gall told the two accused men in a hushed High Court in Hong Kong. "You deliberately dumped your entire crew into the ocean, one by one, and left them to die, rather than pay them their wages."

Dismissing the appeals by Leung Kam-chuen and Kong Lai-wah against their 20-month jail sentences, Justice Gall summarised the events that took place a year earlier aboard the *Frangenti*. "When the boat approached Hong Kong, Leung asked the crew to leave their cabin one at a time and come on deck, telling them they were going to be paid. First came Tsoi Tai, 25, but, instead of paying him, Leung banged him over the head with a wooden pole, pushed him into the sea and, when he tried to climb back on board, threw live lobsters at him,

forcing him back into the ocean. Then Chan Mo, 30, was asked to put on a blindfold and 'walk this way for a laugh,' and was guided overboard. Finally, Ching Sze-kan, 27, was chased all round the boat and became so terrified when Leung attempted to ram an eel up his backside that he dived into the water by himself.

Luckily, all three men were rescued by passing fishing boats, or this crime would never have been discovered. Guilty. Appeal dismissed. You disgust me." *(Eastern Express, 21 October 1995. Spotter — Dr George Adams)*

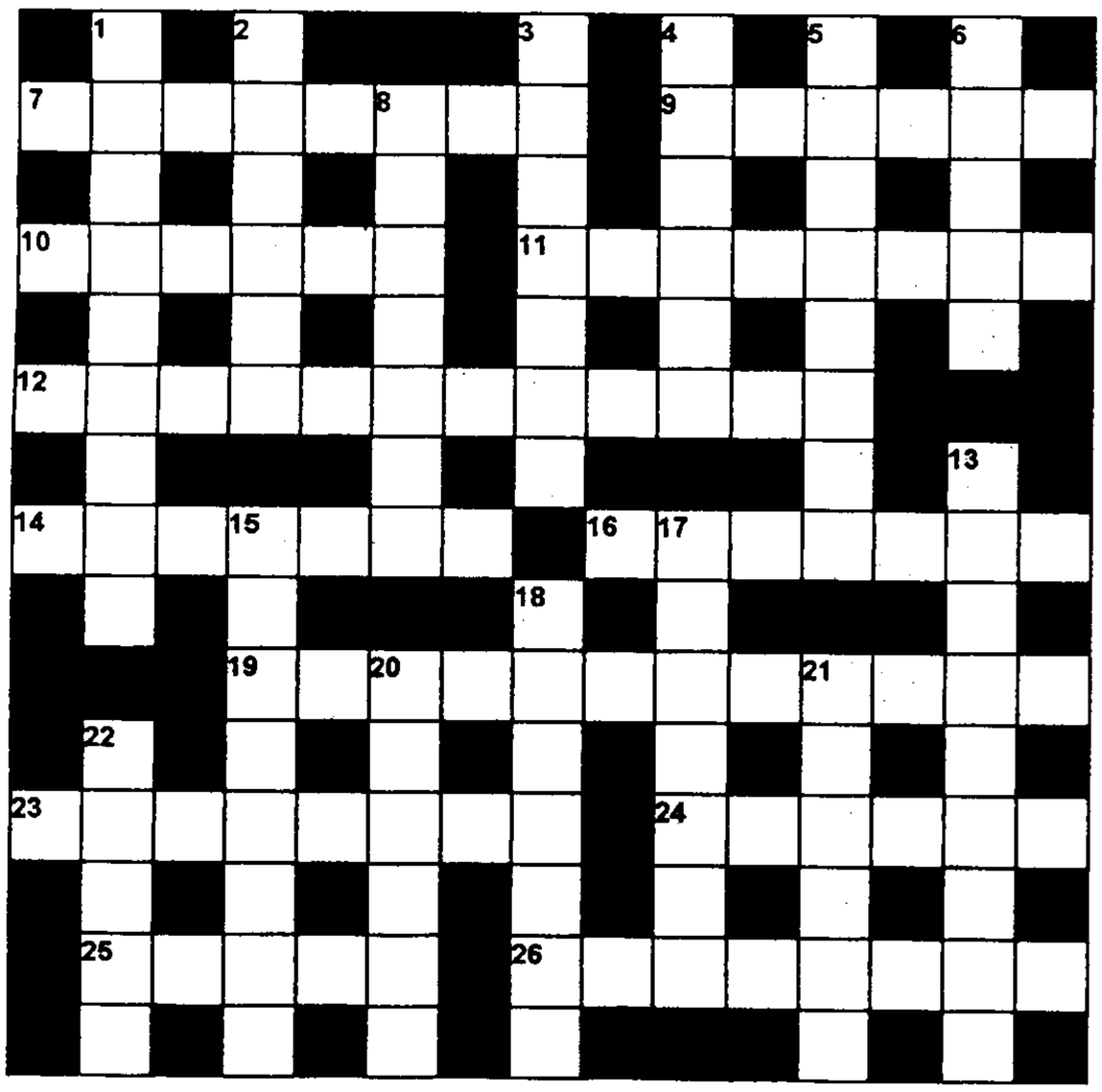
—●—

● *"HE grabbed me in the lobby and nudged me into an elevator," Carol Giger told a New York City court, "and I was so surprised I didn't resist. The instant the doors had shut, he pressed the basement button, and whispered 'going down', and giggled. Then he waved a $50 bill in front of me, said 'you know you want it, you'll do anything for it,' and stuck one hand down my blouse and the other hand right up my skirt."*

Giger, an assistant district attorney from Brooklyn, was giving evidence for the prosecution during an assault case brought against Joel Levy, 32, a salesman from Queens. Levy's attorney later explained that it was all a case of mistaken identity. "My client, who lives in an apartment with his girlfriend, was alone for the afternoon, and put in an order for a call girl named Brandy to come over. While he was waiting, his girlfriend arrived home unexpectedly, so he hastily improvised a plan. He intended to intercept Brandy in the lobby of the building, have a brief liaison with her in the basement, and then get back to his apartment before his girlfriend suspected anything. When he saw a good-looking woman waiting in the lobby, he naturally assumed it was Brandy, and the unfortunate incident in the elevator then took place. In mitigation, my client wishes to inform the court that his girlfriend threw him out of the apartment after the incident, and that the call girl agency debited his American Express card for a cancellation fee." (Brooklyn Gazette, 20 November 1995. Spotter — Anon)

EYE CROSSWORD 45 by Cyclops

£100 Winner JEREMY DOYLE



ACROSS

7 Is charm somehow a quality of Major? Far from it! (8)
9 Feeling randy having mounted one-time PM — no hard on though (2,4)
10 'Public servants' love-in!', *Sun* explodes (6)
11 It leaves an unfortunate hanging around with no recourse to the law (5,3)
12 Winner possibly? There but for the grace of God… (2,5,2,3)
14 Shrink from arse-like youth on street (7)
16 Make a psychological mess of Roger once at university (5,2)
19 Slogan that saw an embarrassed Major and co. return to rock bottom? (4,2,6)
23 Possibly forget to accept thanks for a bit of rubbing (8)
24 What's the point in mixed sauna? It's sick-making! (6)
25 Conclude a Greek character should be shoved in drink (3,2)
26 For those who'll have no conception of European spending limit (5,3)

DOWN

1 Deliberate war machine gives the government ideas, supposedly (5-4)
2 Al's left outside, daubing on wall (6)
3 Australian native nerd, a euphemistic bastard inside (7)
4 Rubber from Bog city in its abbreviated form (6)
5 Where members can be seen getting hard inside an English flower (3,5)
6 (see 22)
8 Time to get out of underwear when you get the runs! (7)
13 Schwarzenegger married into a corrupt Uncle Sam (9)
15 A nutty operation… (8)
17 … chaired by Major for display purposes only? (7)
18 Listens to one abstainer put the kibosh on Socialist initiative (7)
20 A number two secured by Prince — yes, it's really naff (6)
21 Not so cloying as Squidgy, but sickly sentimental all the same? (6)
22/6 Journalists need drinks dispenser available when their all-powerful boss appears (5,5)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 19.01.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 44

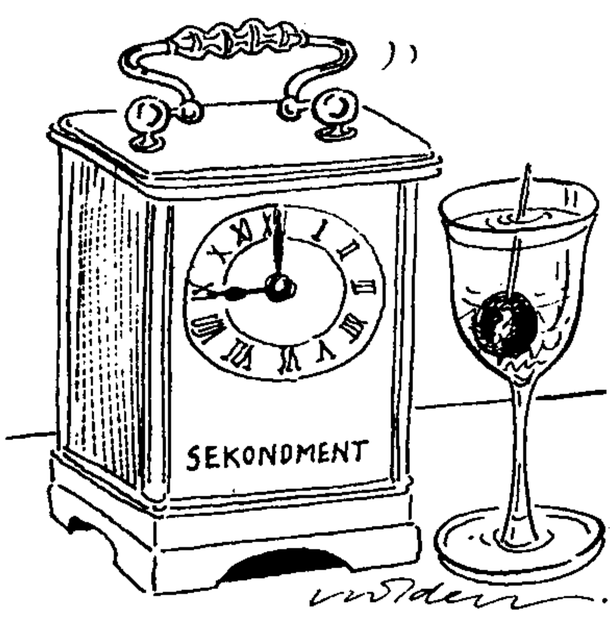
ACROSS: 8 Monarchy 9 Bosom 10/11 No room at the inn 11 (see 10) 12 Omaha 13 In hiding 15 Manacle 17 Muffled 20 Congeal 22 Edith 24 Specimen 26 Athens 27/14 Noel's House Party 28 Outburst.

DOWN: 1 Ho ho ho 2 Panorama 3/18 O Come All Ye Faithful 4 Dynamic 5 Abut 6 Ascend 7 Eminence 14 (see 27) 16 Al Capone 18 (see 3) 19 Clinton 21 Nicked 23 Honest 25 Mrs T.

The Secret Diary of John Major aged 47¾

New Year's Eve

"Ring out the old, ring in the new," I said to my wife Norman as the clock struck 9. "Oh good," she said, "shall I start packing then?", missing the point as usual. "Oh no," I told her, "this New Year marks a new start, new beginnings, new initiatives, new policies..." "...and New Labour" she added, missing the point for the second time in a matter of minutes. I poured myself another glass of Dom Portillo's Very Dry British Sherry to toast the future. "The Party," I said, "is now



firmly on track for my fifth election victory in a row. We are broad church, driving at a prudent speed down the middle lane, in accordance with the new EU directive on Coaches on Motorways. And above all, thanks to my heroic victory over Mr Redwood, our Party is now totally united."

New Year's Day

As I said, we are totally united, except for someone called Emma Nicholson, who has decided that she is going to join the Liberal Democrats because the government is too right wing. Fortunately, Mr Heseltine managed to get on all the breakfast TV and radio programmes and he was very statesmanlike indeed. He said that he was not going to indulge in personal abuse about a useless old cow like Miss Nicholson, who had only committed her unprincipled act of treason because he hadn't given her a job.

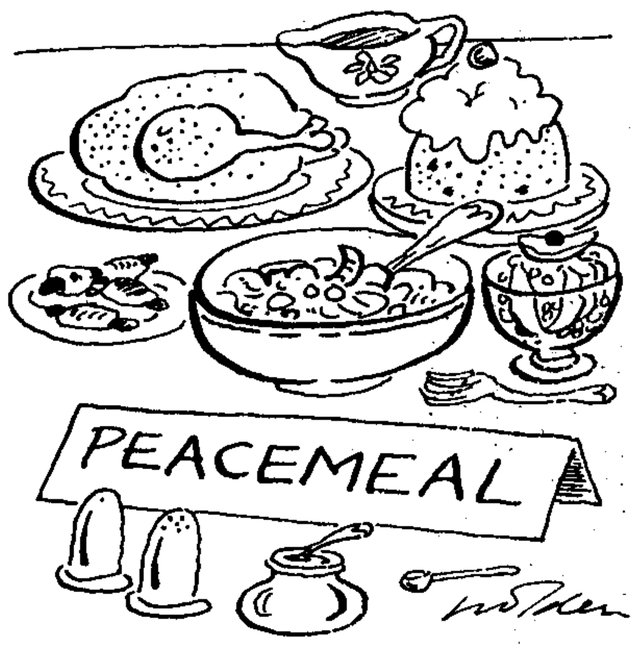
Then Mr Portaloo came on to say that it was nonsense that the government was too right wing. "It is not nearly right wing enough," he said. "It is high time that certain other people at the highest levels of the Party joined the Liberal Democrats, so that we can have a real Conservative government which cracks down on benefit scroungers, foreigners and Europhiles."

Wednesday

Dr Mawhinney has been doing his sums and he has worked out that we only have a majority of one. "Then we'd better have an election," I told him. His face went not inconsiderably white and he said: "But then we wouldn't have a majority at all, prime minister." We therefore decided to do the honourable thing and hang onto power for as long as possible.

Thursday

I have made it perfectly clear that I will make no deals of any kind with the Ulster Unionists, just because I need their votes to hang onto power for as long as possible. In order to leave no possible misunderstanding about my very firm position on this, I invited Mr Trimble and Dr Paisley to a special seven-course banquet at Number 10, with a musical accompaniment provided by the Fife And Drum Marching Band of the 9th Apprentice Boys Orange Order, who are to receive a £2 million grant, I hear, from the National Lottery.



Friday

I had a very nice note from Dr Paisley thanking me for my hospitality and saying that in return he would not hesitate to bring down the government unless I arrested Mr Adams and put him on trial for high treason. I replied that I would give very careful consideration to his constructive proposals. The main thing is not to endanger my peace process, which has been my main achievement in government so far, even more historic than the Cones Hotline, the Citizen's Charter and the opt-out from the Social Chapter in the Maastricht Treaty. The peace process is still going extremely well. Today there were only six murders in Northern Ireland, by a group called the Irish Republican Force For Direct Action Against John Major, who clearly are not related in any way to the IRA or Mr Adams.

Saturday

I was very pleased to see from the breakfast television that another of my policies is working extremely well — i.e. the privatisation of water. There were wonderful pictures of people in the north of England having water delivered to their doors by special lorries provided by the efficient new water companies. All people have to do is stand outside their houses with old kettles, jugs and baby baths and they can have almost as much water as they want — and all free! This would not have happened in the bad old days of the nationalised water boards, with their old-fashioned tap system.

Sunday

My friend Sir David Frost has invited me *again* onto his influential Sunday morning television programme "No One's Watching".

A researcher rang me up ten minutes before the broadcast began, saying that Mr Blair was out of the country and Mr Heseltine was too busy running it — so could I get in a taxi and come on over?

I did so at once, stopping only to shout at my brother Terry who was still waiting by the security gates to give me my Christmas card. "You're not the only one who goes on television, you know!" I shouted. "Oh no."

The abrasive Sir David tried to catch me out as usual by asking me to fill in as much time as I could before "Power Rangers" by saying whatever I liked.

I seized the opportunity to, spell out my message to the party in no uncertain terms.

"We are in the centre lane slightly to the right and it would be madness now for us to hand over the controls to an airline pilot who does not even know how to fly a rubber dinghy in the Serpentine. Oh yes or, rather, no!"

I also made a veiled attack on Mr Portaloo to show that I am firmly *not* in the right lane as I previously said.

"Michael is a great patriot but, looking back at his conference speech, he would be the first to admit that he made a complete fool of himself."

I ended by saying that unless the party stopped our bickering and mud-slinging then all those useless bastards would lose us the election.

Mr Frost was very impressed and said in a firm voice: "And now over to Linda Zimbabwe with this morning's weather."

100 Years Ago

THE LONDON TIMES

January 8th 1852

Bearded Troublemaker To Be Expelled

by Our Man In The British Museum WILLIAM RUSSELL-TWISK

THERE were further demands today from the Government for the immediate deportation of a dissident German writer who has been living in Hampstead.

Dr Karl Marxari, an avowed Marxist, has spent years writing a book that is highly critical of capitalist regimes throughout the Western world.

This include friends and trading partners of the British Empire, including Herr Bismark's Germany and Czar Alexander's Russia.

Mr Marx, using the latest technology of letters and carrier pigeons, has been using London as a safe haven from which to undermine such friendly powers.

Lord Liverpool told the editor of the Times, Lord David Frost, that "there was a delicate balancing act between allowing free speech and jeopardising the sales of guns to Saudi Arabia". *(shurely 'Muskets to The Imperial Army', Ed.)*

Lord Liverpool added that he would be giving this difficult matter a great deal of thought before deporting him to Highgate Cemetery.

ON OTHER PAGES

'String him up' by St Dominica Lawson 3
England lose Third Test to Cape side 9
Unfunny engraving by Sir John Tenniel 11

MICHAEL GRADE TO BE DEPORTED

by Our Chinese Staff **Or Fan Ded**

AFTER intense pressure from Peking, Anne Widdicombe last night announced that after "no consideration" she was delighted to expel the controller of Channel 4 for his subversive activities which threatened Sino-British trade.

Grade, using hi-tec television programmes, was attempting to destabilise the friendly government in China with whom Britain had enjoyed good relations for hundreds of years, by suggesting they went around murdering children.

LATE NEWS

Pressure on News Television has resulted in a new ruling that Home Office Minister Anne Widdicombe should not be shown until *after* the watershed. The move follows concern from parents groups about children having nightmares.

THAT CHARLES KLOSTERS PRESS CONFERENCE IN FULL

1st Hack: Are you enjoying yourself, sire?

Charles: I was until you bastards turned up.

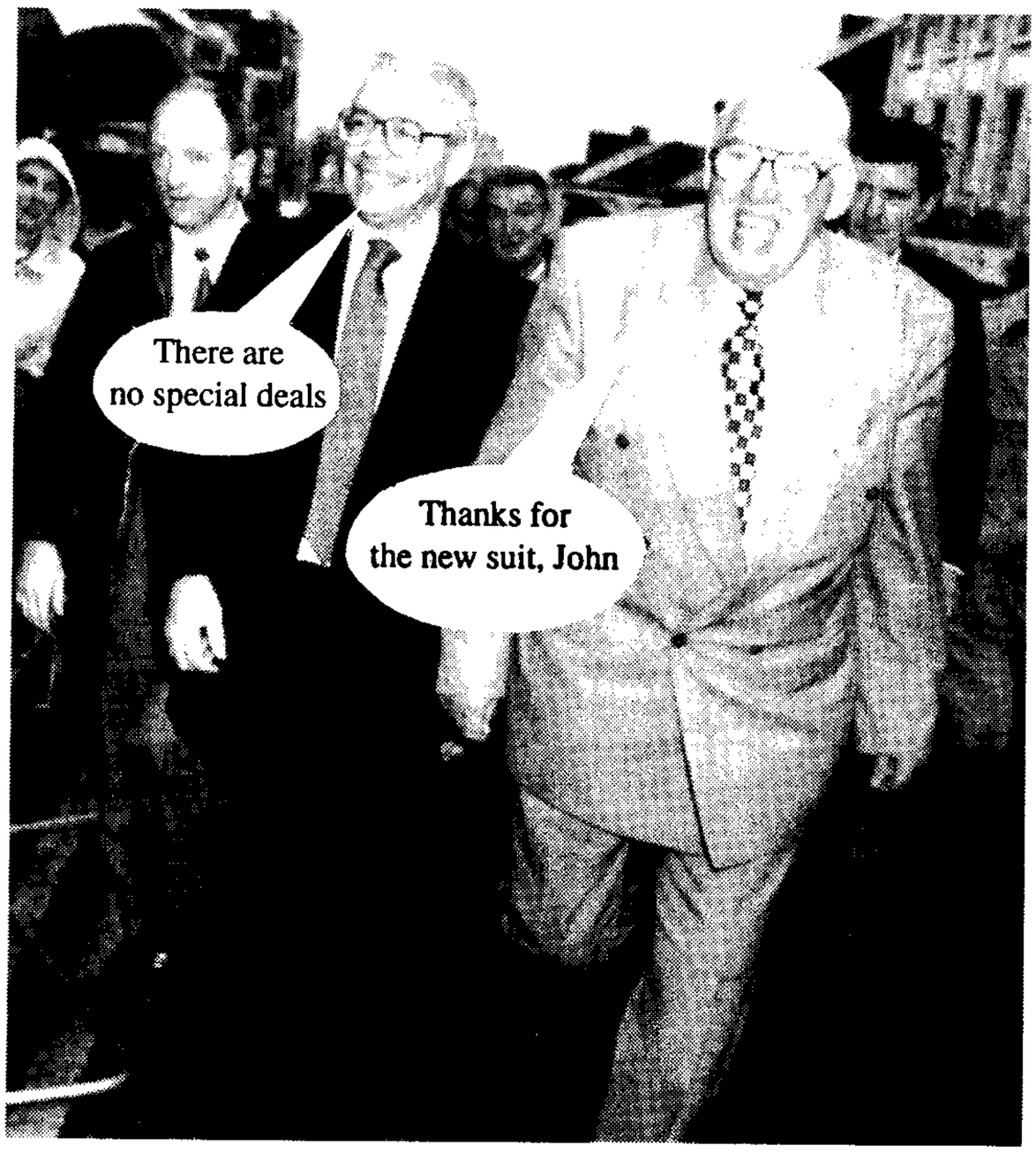
2nd Hack: Ha ha ha ha. Would you mind taking off your dark glasses, your Highness?

Charles: What and have to look at you scumbags?

3rd Hack: Ha ha ha ha! May I say how marvellously you ski, your divine Majesty!

Charles: How dare you! Right, that's it. I've had enough! The conference is over.

Hacks: Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!



"... or, if you find yourself on a sinking ship..."

LUCKY 3 WIN NATIONAL SLOTTERY!

THREE bishops today shared the limelight when they appeared on TV to attack the National Lottery as "obscene".

The lucky bishops this week were:

- **Right Reverend Barrington-Flannel, Bishop of Sidcup.**
- **Right Reverend Flannington-Barrel, Bishop of Watford Gap.**
- **Right Reverend Fannington-Bannit, Bishop of the M25 (clockwise only).**

All three ticked the box for Maximum Publicity.

An Undertaker writes

AS an undertaker I am often asked to bury people who are alive.

What happens is the patient, or corpse, is examined by their GP on New Year's Eve.

The Doctor may be suffering from *Medicus pissarticus novus annis normalis*, to give it the full medical name.

If you are worried that you are not really dead, you should not seek medical advice. Snore loudly instead.

© An Undertaker

RAT LEAVES SINKING SHIP

by Our Political Staff **Lunchtime O'Verboard**

A LEADING rat today leaped from the deck of the Torytanic saying that she could no longer bear to stay on a ship that was "drifting to the right".

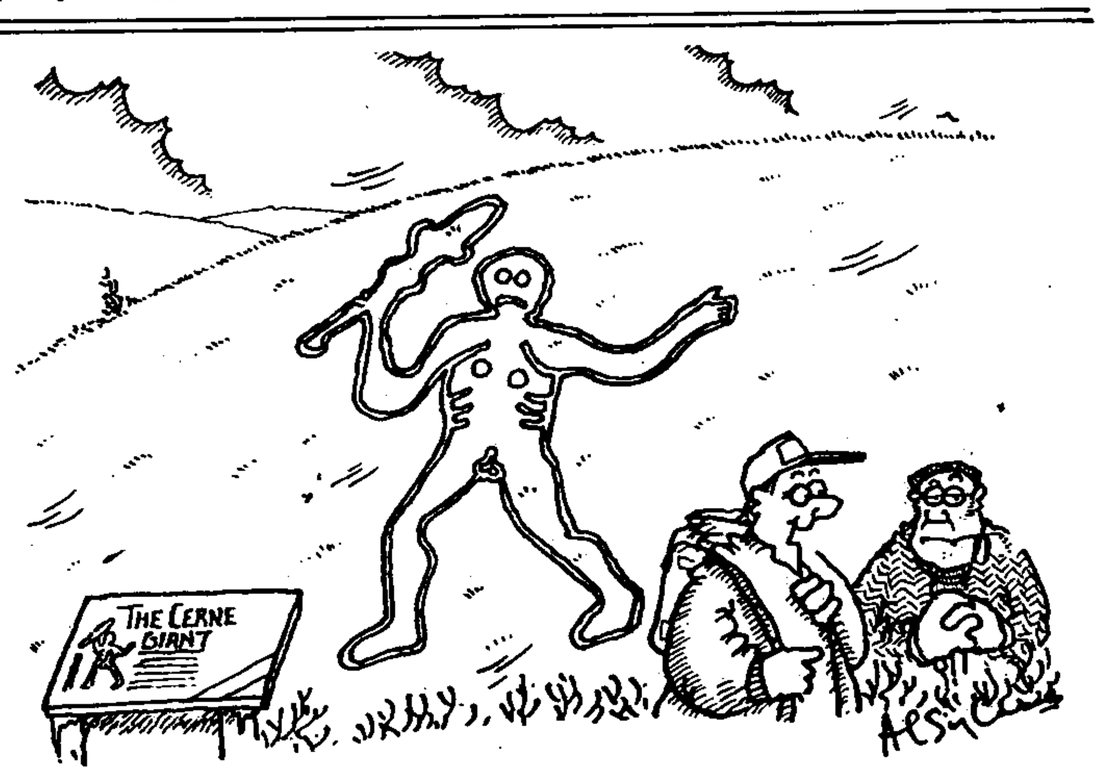
Miss Emma Rat is only the latest in a long time of rats to have deserted the Torytanic in recent months, and brings the total number of rodents remaining on board to only 324.

The captain, however, denied that the ship was sinking, and the deputy-skipper delivered a whingeing attack on Miss Rat, accusing her of being "a total rat who only wanted to jump ship because she knew it was sinking".

Liberal Democ Rat

As she swam from the now almost totally submerged vessel, she was rescued and welcomed aboard a passing rowing boat, skippered by Captain Paddy Goingdown.

"I admire her courage enormously," said Goingdown, "in deserting one sinking ship for another."



"That's amazing — and how did you know we were in for another cold spell?"

THE TIMES

NEW WORDS

with Philip Howard

TRIMBLE
v.int. to quake or shiver at the prospect of some unpleasant future occurrence. N. Irish origin. e.g. "The PM was all a-trimble at the thought of the Unionists bringing down his government" *(Hansard 1996).*

ORBACH
n. form of psychological test in which the female patient is shown an ink-blot resembling her husband, and is then encouraged to shout "He is a bastard". e.g. "Diana passed the Orbach test with flying colours" *(Daily Express 1996).*

CRONJE
v. trans. to complain about a decision, to protest in uncivilised manner. e.g. "He should stop cronjeing at once. The umpire's decision is final" *(Geoffrey Borecott commentating for Sky Cricket, Jan 1996).*

OFWAT
n. complete absence of water in either summer or winter, due to privatisation. North Country abbrev. of " 'appen, t'waters off". See also OFGAS.

WILSON WANTED TO BE 'FIFTH BEATLE'

by Our 30-Year-Rule Staff **P.R. O'Booze**

SHOCK papers released today under the 30-year rule reveal that in 1965 the Labour Prime Minister Harold Wislon wrote to the Beatles asking to join the Liverpool-based popular singing group.

In a letter marked "Top Secret and Confidential", Mr Wilson spelt out his plan to win over the youth vote at the 1966 General Election.

We can now for the first time publish the letter which could have changed the course of British history.

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

12 June 1965

Dear John, Paul, George and the Other One:

I have long been a great admirer of all your wonderful records, which have done so much to boost Britain's export drive, such as We're All Going On A Summer Holiday, It's Not Unusual and Come Fly With Me. As you may know, I am like you a Liverpudlian, which I think eminently qualifies me to become the fifth member of your delightful group.

As a small token of my appreciation for all the happiness you have brought to so many young people in Britain today, I am offering you each an MBE which I hope you do not take as in any way a bribe. Although I neither sing nor play the ukulele, I am sure that I would nevertheless add a charismatic and dynamic stage presence which would greatly increase the effect of your act, both here and abroad.

Her Majesty the Queen joins me in wishing you a Happy Christmas.

Signed
Marcia Forkbender
pp Harold Wislon P.M.

PS: If you were to consider my offer, I could throw in some brand-new Gannex macs made by my friend Lord Kagan.

THOSE 30-YEAR PAPERS IN FULL

Wislon ordered Mountbatten to assassinate Ian Smith
The Night George Brown got into the Queen's bed
Benn planned "a nuclear reactor in every home by year 2000"

"Do you believe in good?"

EXCLUSIVE SERIALISATION

110 million copies already sold

QUEEN OF HEARTS

by Sylvie Krin

THE STORY SO FAR: Diana has spent Christmas alone and is now holidaying on the remote Caribbean island of Bacardi.

Now read on...

"WOULD your Highness be lookin' to drink another Diet Mango and Coconut Daiquiri?" The beaming smile of Joshua, head waiter of the prestigious Old Plantation Inn, greeted the prostrate form of the most beautiful woman in the world as she lay clad only in the tiniest Wallace and Gromit designer micro-one piece.

She looked up with her limpid blue eyes from the heavy paperback on her lap, *All Men Are Bastards* by Susie Wackenbacker.

"Yah, yah, that would be brill." She could not help but notice his lithe muscular form as he sashayed towards the poolside James Bond 007 Bar decorated with signed photos of all the stars who had played the handsome secret agent.

Once again, she tried to make sense of the opening paragraph of her friend and mentor's seminal work. The personal inscription on the title page "Chuck Chuck!" was clear enough, but the heavy text seemed to swim before her eyes in the glare of the blazing Bacardian sun.

"Patriarchal totalitarianism... affirmative assertion... developing sense of self... need for repersonalisation via therapeutic investigation... masculine infantilism..." What did it all mean?

Her task was not made easier by the re-emergence of Joshua with her exotic libation crowned with strawberry, lime peel, nutmegs and a small pink parasol bearing the legend "Fly KLM".

"Here you are Lady. Dis'll make you ready for any damn t'ing."

To Diana he seemed like a black Adonis, so carefree, so untroubled. Every movement seemed to speak of a simple joy in life. His T-shirt summed it all up. "RELAX. BE HAPPY", it read.

"What d'you studyin' there?"

Joshua picked up Diana's book, its pages now smeared with Jean de Florette Factor 12 with its distinctive smell of carrot and Jasmine. She sat up on the edge of the lounger and found herself trying to explain Ms Wackenbacker's theory to her new mahogany-skinned confidant.

"Right... I spent Christmas on my own, which was really strong and in control, and I wasn't lonely for one minute or anything, and I certainly didn't need any men around me."

Joshua sat down next to her on the lounger and shook his head.

"A beautiful lady like you alone at Christmas? In Joshua's book dat ain't right."

There was a silence broken only by the distant splash of the wavelets on the white sand of Goldfinger Bay and the cry of the Kermit birds as they flew in a line overhead.

"You don't understand," Diana persisted. "You see, me being here alone is a statement, just like Susie says. I'm happy here. I'm giving out a signal that I can do what I want without having to conform to some man's demands, right?"

Joshua merely smiled. "I'm on lunch break at one o'clock. Why don't you join me down on the beach?"

"Yah. OK. Sure," she found herself saying. There was something so comforting about his direct masculine confidence.

"You can tell me some more 'bout little Miss Susie. And I'll tell you 'bout the Joshua cure for loneliness. Ha ha ha..."

"HA HA HA! And a Happy New Year from all of us here on TV Fort Lauderdale KYJ." The American comedian in a kilt and a check jacket grinned from the screen of the hotel's cable TV service. "And a special Hogmanay Hallo to those of you folks who are celebrating on your ownsome..."

Diana flicked the remote control to 'off' and threw it down in irritation. Instead she took up the letter she had been drafting to her lawyers, the distinguished firm of Julius Alcock and Anthony Bull.

"Dear Julius," it began in her childish handwriting. "I am a strong single woman with no need for a man to support me. How dare Charles suggest that I get divorced from him."

Perhaps she would finish it later. Now was not really the time. What was the time again? She glanced at her platinum Gambaccini chronometer, a gift from her friend President Testos Terone of Argentina. Twenty to one. Were they five hours behind in England or eight hours ahead? It wouldn't matter anyway, surely?

She picked up the mobile phone in one hand and her Semotex personal organiser in the other, and began flicking through the pages. "Let's start with the 'A's," she thought.

But each time it was the same. "I'm sorry, Simon and Emma are out..." "I'm sorry, Rupert and Charlotte cannot take your call..." "I'm sorry, Donald and Rachel cannot take your call..." And when she did at last hear a manly human voice, it was an angry shout of "Do you know what time it is? I thought I told you never to ring me again!"

She snapped the book shut on page Z, and felt a single warm tear sliding down her perfectly formed honey-tanned cheek.

From the blurb on the back of the up-turned paperback, Susie's words seemed to mock her, "Walk tall, walk alone..."

As the clock on the little clapboard white church behind the palm trees chimed one, Diana rose from the bed and strode purposefully towards the welcoming beach...

Radio 3 Highlights

8.30-8.45 **Billy Odd**: Newly discovered opera by Benjamin Britten tells the tragic story of former comedian and bird-watcher who becomes obsessed with how terrible Britten's operas are and makes a scene at his daughter's carol concert.

CAST IN FULL

Billy Odd	BILL ODDIE
Headmaster	TIM BROOK-TAYLOR
1st Parent	ROBERT TEAR
2nd Parent	DAME JANET STREET-BAKER
Children	PUPILS OF THE GRAEME KINDERGARDEN SCHOOL, CAMDEN

The BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Peter Grimes

TV Highlights

8.30 BBC2 **The Flannel Trousers** with Bennett and Gromit *(not very animated feature).* Lovable plasticine Northerner Bennett goes on a new adventure to Westminster Abbey with his faithful cameraman Gromit. Dressed in his old woolly jumper and eating his favourite cheese sandwich, Bennett has a lovely three hours wandering about and telling old jokes in a northern accent.

Lord Colyton an apology

Lord Colyton is not dead, as we reported on Dec 30; he is in fact in hospital in Monaco. We sincerely apologise to Lord Colyton and his family for the mistake.

Daily Telegraph

St Cakes

Trinity Term begins today. There are no pupils left in the school, due to knifings, murders, and drug-related deaths. Ecstasies are on 19th January.

KBE: Sir Nicholas Leeson

Dame: Myra Hindley

CBE: Bruce Grobbelaar

Honours List

The following names were inadvertently omitted from the Honours List published in our last issue.

Knight of Garter and Bath (KGB)

Sir Harvey Torycash, Chairman, The Payola Group, for services to folk-dancing in Hertfordshire.

Sir Hugh Massive-Bribe, Chief Executive, Bung Investments plc, for services to conserving coastal pathways in Oxfordshire.

Sir Reginald Bigge de Nation, Senior Partner of Sleaze, Sleaze and Mawsleaze, for services to homeless carol singing.

BSE (Classless)

Sydney Harbottle, head printer of Abraham and Turnbull, Birmingham, printers of tickets to the National Lottery.

Mrs Treborella Mint, treasurer of Shoes for Aged, Daventry branch, for the past 17 years.

HRT (Commonwealth and Colonial)

Pitcairn Islands – **Mrs Fletcher Christian de Looney**, editor of the Pitcairn Post and Evening Telegraph since 1923.

Don't miss the

Daily ExMail

The world's top writers are joining our new, young, original, soaraway *DAILY EXTELEGRAPH*

This week

Monday: **Geoffrey Wheatcroft**
Tuesday: **Mary Kenny**
Wednesday: **William Rees-Mogg**
Thursday: **Geoffrey Wheatcroft and Mary Kenny**
Friday: **Mary Wheatcroft and Geoffrey Rees-Mogg**
Saturday: **Er... that's it.**

And don't forget in the

SUNDAY EXTIMES

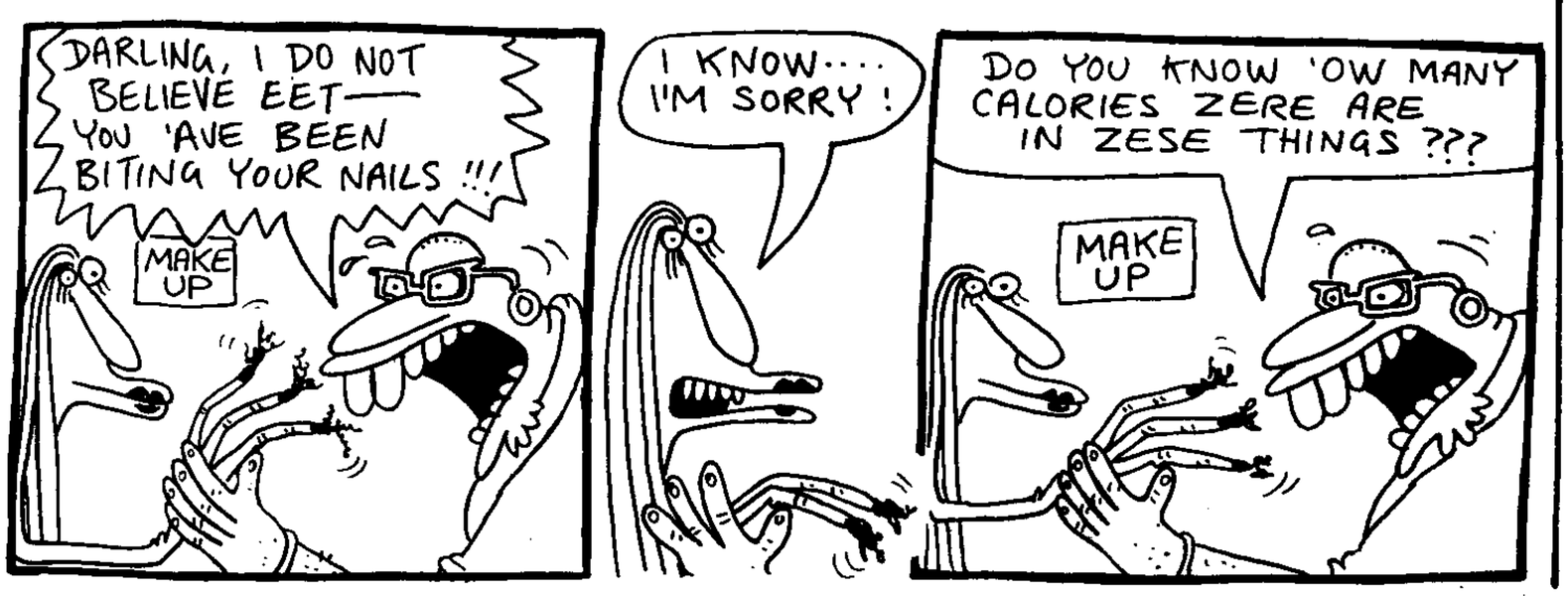
Mariella Washedup: the woman you thought was dead.

Julie Butchill *(sic)*: the woman with her finger on the dyke *(shurely 'pulse'? Ed).*

The Express

The Paper They're All Throwing Away

Long John Silver first met 'Blind Pugh' when they were cabin boys together


SUPERMODELS
KERBER
DARLING, I DO NOT BELIEVE EET— YOU 'AVE BEEN BITING YOUR NAILS !!!
MAKE UP
I KNOW···· I'M SORRY !
DO YOU KNOW 'OW MANY CALORIES ZERE ARE IN ZESE THINGS ???
MAKE UP

A Cab Driver writes

This Week **Izzy Fizz** (Cab No. 1795)

Blimey! D'you see about that bloke who strangled that burglar? You know what I'd do with him if I had my way? I wouldn't string him up. No way. I'd give him a medal. It's the only language these people understand. *(Shome mishtake shurely? Ed.)*

KNEE LASHES FIFA GOAL POST PLAN

by **E I Erewego**, Our Man In The Stand With A Bottle Of Auld MacHooch Alcoholic Whisky And A Final Demand From Barclaycard For Full Payment Within Seven Days

THE WORLD of soccer was rocked by the news yesterday that the game's ruling body, FIFA, is to consider a plan to increase the size of goals in a bid to attract greater TV audiences in countries like America, where only one adult in three hundred million watches football (Sid Bonkerstein Junior). According to the report, it is thought that bigger goals will mean more goals, and an even bigger slice of the sports-viewing cake.

But last night, Ron Knee, 59, the tight-lipped manager of AFC Neasden, blasted the proposals for not having gone far enough.

Postman Ron

"They are talking about just a few centimetres longer and higher," said the soccer super brain. "This is useless to a team like Neasden, who have yet to score a single goal against the opposition in a hundred years of competitive football.

Knee Jerk Reaction

"There is a much better way to increase goals," Knee continued, "and that is to get rid of the posts entirely. Every time the ball beats the keeper, anywhere along the goal line, it would count. We have tried it out in training and, although it is early days, the lads and I believe the plan definitely has legs — which is sadly not so in the case of our legendary net minder, Wally Foot, who has only one. I have sent my 'No Post' details to FIFA and expect an early response."

FIFA, indeed, was quick to react to Knee's revolutionary solution to goal scoring and, following a phone call by the president to Neasden Police Station, the ashen-faced manager was breathalysed and later charged with a number of offences.

LATE SCORE

New Year Friendly
(using the new FIFA system)

Dollis Hill 34,789
(Kleinwort 32,446, Benson 2,242 Pevsner [o.g.] 1)

AFC Neasden 0

WE WISH BOTH OUR CUSTOMERS A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

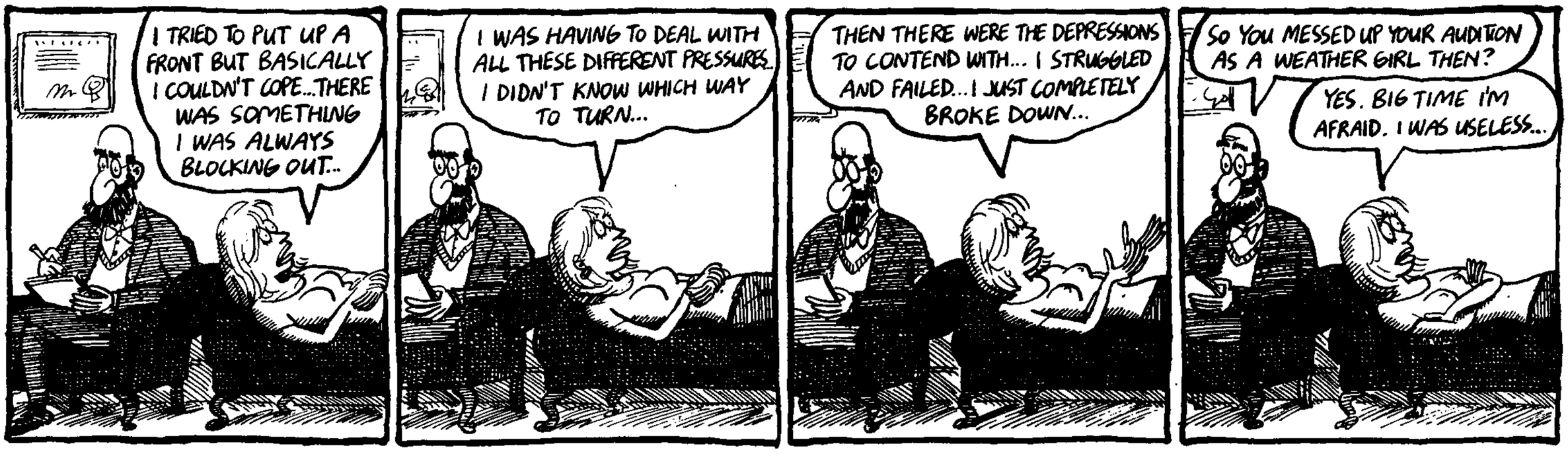
Photomecca advert. Amateur Photographer

Great Bores Of Today.

"Dear Everyone: It's been quite a year for the Belmont family! Rachel added another member to the ever-increasing tribe in September! Little Anna weighed in at just under 7lb and already has her father's infectious laugh!! John by the way has been promoted and has clocked up 300 airmiles with his regular trips to Guernsey where he is now acting Head of Department!! We sustained a sad loss in March when Derek's Great Aunt Maud who lived in Seattle passed away. We could not get over for the funeral due to the building work that is still (!!!) going on in the new kitchen and patio extension. The latest estimate for completion is August 1996 but we'll believe it when we see it!!! However we were all delighted to welcome our Canadian cousin Simon for a couple of weeks in the summer who stayed with his Japanese girlfriend, Mioko. They brought a breath of fresh air to Hillcroft and kept us up to date with all the goings on of the Canadian Belmonts!! Maybe see y'all in Winnipeg in '97!!! Fluff the cat had 9 kittens in October and they have all found good homes in the village except the tortoiseshell which we have called Jack after Simon's father. He is doing very well after his operation and the doctors say he will make a full recovery – fingers crossed!! Kate is doing her mock GCSEs in English, French, Maths, Politics, Economics and Media Studies (!!!!) so we'd better watch what we say when she's around!!! No seriously she's doing really well. Colin passed his cycling proficiency test and..."

Celeb

LIGGER


I TRIED TO PUT UP A FRONT BUT BASICALLY I COULDN'T COPE...THERE WAS SOMETHING I WAS ALWAYS BLOCKING OUT...
I WAS HAVING TO DEAL WITH ALL THESE DIFFERENT PRESSURES. I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH WAY TO TURN...
THEN THERE WERE THE DEPRESSIONS TO CONTEND WITH... I STRUGGLED AND FAILED...I JUST COMPLETELY BROKE DOWN...
SO YOU MESSED UP YOUR AUDITION AS A WEATHER GIRL THEN?
YES. BIG TIME I'M AFRAID. I WAS USELESS...

SUCCESSION STRUGGLE ROCKS WORLD'S RICHEST DYNASTY

by Eye Focus Team

FOLLOWING the decision of His Majesty King Faht to have a stroke and spend more time with his 315 wives, the House of Sand *(shurely 'Saud'? Ed)* is facing its biggest crisis since 1982.

Here exclusively for *Eye* readers is a unique guide to the mysterious brothers who now wield power in the House of Horror *(shurely 'Sand'? Ed)*.

Who will lead the world's richest oil-producing nation into the 15th century?

Prince Sultan Ben Aitken, 69, Head of the Escort Procurement Office since 1992. Close personal friend of Mark Thatcher. Moderately religious, deeply cosmopolitan and favours cutting off ties that his brother is wearing. 137th brother of King Faht.

Prince Mohamed Al Fayed, 92, controversial Egyptian born proprietor of Harrods and supplier of ties to the above. Unlikely to succeed King Faht owing to the fact that he is not one of his 8412 brothers.

Crown Prince Abdullah Al-Khilyah, 74, Minister for Repression since 1951. Religiously religious and moderately immoderate, he favours cutting off hands to the West *(shurely 'ties'? Ed)*.

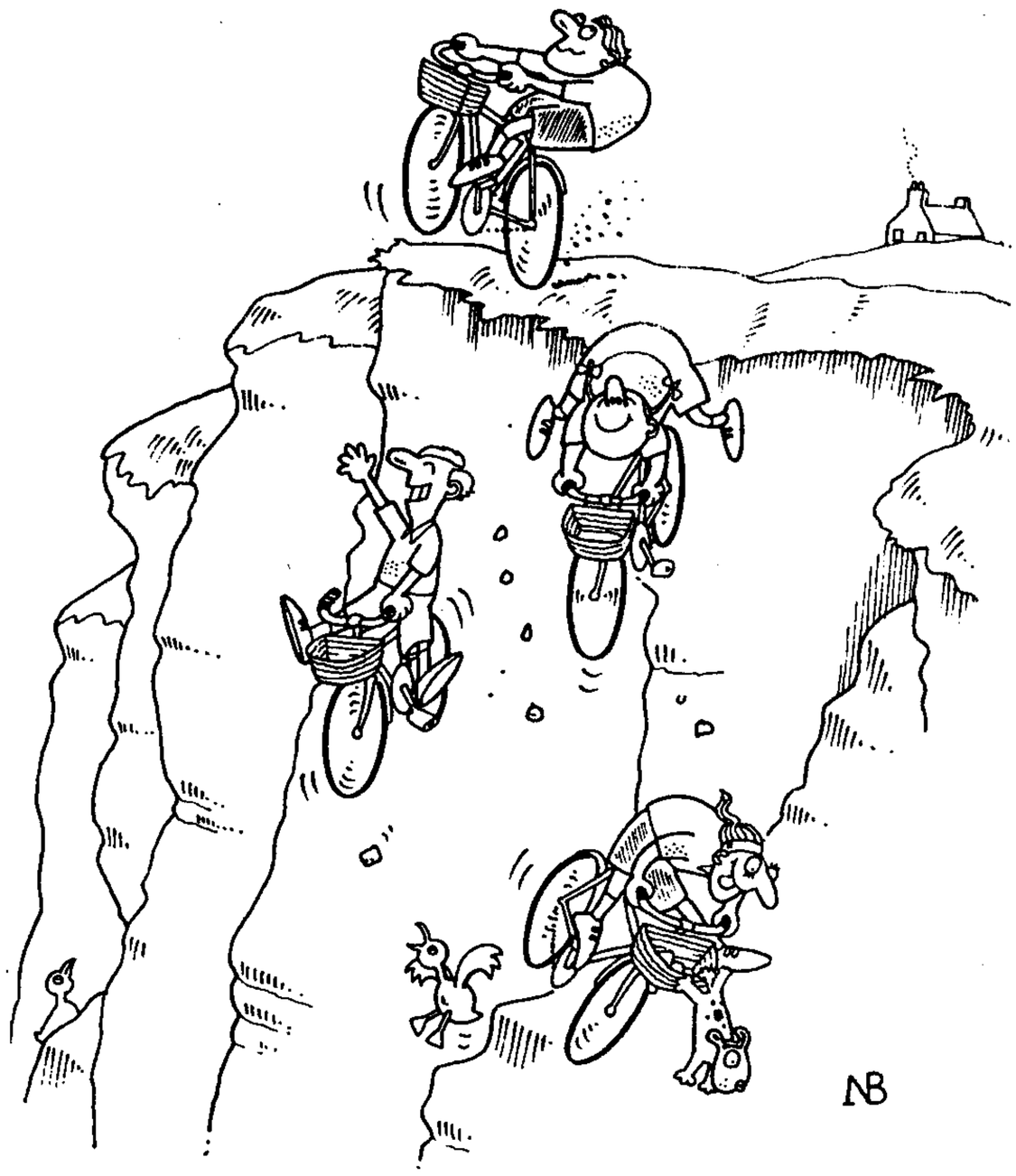
Prince Jaspan the Magnificent, 58, editor of the ailing Jeddah Observer. *(That's enough princes, Ed.)*

"I know where you live, you bastard!"

His Imperial Excellency Ex-King Ibid Al-Faht, 79, Ruler of the Sandy Wastes and Keeper of the Two Billion Pounds *(shurely* 'Two Shrines'? Ed)

Prince Saab Al Turbo, 77, Minister for Shady Arms Deals since 1991. Close personal friend of Jonathan Aitken. Moderate, cosmopolitan, deeply religious. 17th brother of King Faht.

Prince Yamama Bakhanda, 75, Minister for Overseas Bank Accounts since 1987. Godfather to Peaches Fifi Trixibel Aitken, 12. Deeply moderate, religiously cosmopolitan and favours greater ties from Harrods. 86th brother of King Faht.



The Famous Five found the alcoholic lemonade at Aunt Jane's picnic jolly strong

---

COMING SOON FROM THE BBC

EMMA

✪ CLASSIC SERIAL ✪

The romantic story of a beautiful bossy woman who is so preoccupied with organising everyone else's lives that she is missing out on true happiness herself. Only in the nick of time does she realise that she is really in love with the dashing Captain Pantsdown of the Special Balloon Service, rather than the sickly, hypocritical Rev Major, to whom she has given the distinct impression that she is a passionate Conservative.

CAST

Emma Nicholson ..... EMMA THOMPSON
Captain Pantsdown ..... COLIN FIRTH
Rev John Major ..... DEREK NIMMO
Margaret Thatcher ..... ALISON STEDMAN

Modern Nursery Rhymes

No. 94

**This little Tiggy went to Klosters,
This little Tiggy went home,
This little Tiggy read the papers,
This little Tiggy got on the phone,
And this little Tiggy went wee wee wee all the way to Peter Carter Ruck and told him to write threatening letters to all the editors.**

DIARY

DID *you* have a wonderful time? Did you have a *wonderful* time? *Did* you? Was it a wonderful *time* that you had? In the Eighties, I mean. The Eighties. And all *that stuff*.

A *strange* business, the Eighties. They were really more than a decade, of course. They were a *lifestyle option*. Ten years when we all read World of Interiors in our Designer Conservatories as we sipped Conran's Extra Virgin Olive Oil while listening to Duran Duran as we ordered our BT shares on our cordless phones.

Peter York: Arthur, in the Eighties, what was your own particular favourite Extra Virgin Olive Oil?

Arthur Scargill: I didn't have one.

Peter York: Of course, we're talking pre-*Carluccio's Own Label*, here, aren't we? And to what extent were Spandau Ballet an influence on you during the early Eighties?

Arthur Scargill: We didn't have the time for that. My lads were *striking*.

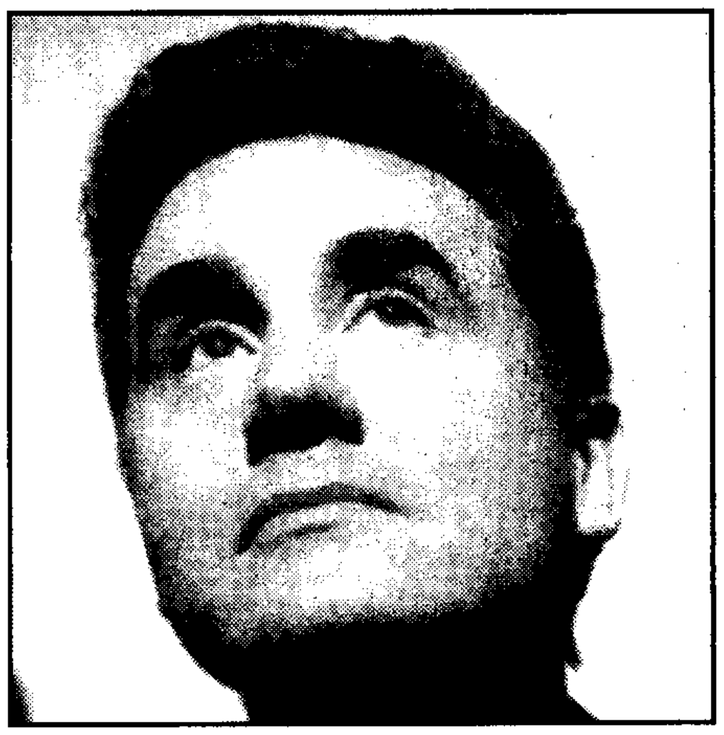
Peter York: *Very* striking. All that *designer grime*. In the early Eighties, the British Miners were right up there with *Depeche Mode* and even *Sham 69*. And the Miners Strike became one of the most exciting lifestyle options of the Eighties, the perfect real-life Theme Park accompaniment to "Do You Really Want To Hurt Me?" by the *desperately* important Boy George.

But if one chap can be said to have invented the Eighties, and *moulded* (a very Eighties concept, that) Government Economic Policy and a full *ratatouille* of social reforms, then that chap was surely Marilyn. Marilyn began the Eighties as a transvestite hat-checker at the infinitely *profound* Blitz club, and ended it as senior policy adviser to Mrs Thatcher herself, *unofficial*, if you will, and rarely, *if ever*, in direct contact with the Divine Mrs T herself, but unsurpassingly *influential* nonetheless.

Peter York: Marilyn, how were the Eighties for you?

Marilyn: Well, the Eighties were all about looking good. It was show-business. By which I mean not just business, but *show* and *business*, and if you put the two together, that's *show* and *business*, then what you end up with is show *plus* business, which equals *business-show*. Yeah, that's it. And it made us all feel very deep. Like, at very least four foot deep, maybe five.

Peter York: And as early as 1982, you were the *unseen hand* behind the far-reaching



PETER YORK

reforms initiated by the Social Affairs Unit...

Marilyn: Come again?

In what way did the Eighties differ from the Seventies? What way, *José*? For a surprisingly large number of us, The Seventies came before the Eighties, in a Bay-City-Rollerish sort of way. In the Seventies, we were drinking *Lucozade* — a very *fizzy-drinkish* thing to do — and in the Eighties we were drinking Capuccino, all *frothy* and *chocolaty* and *YOU-magaziney*. In the Seventies, we were all rummaging around stray dustbins — and horribly *dustbinny* they were too — in the hope of finding a half-eaten sandwich or a stray rat to chew on. But as the Eighties gathered steam, we found we had forgotten about the dustbins and we were dining out at *Le Manoir au Quat' Saisons* (very *French*, very *restauranty*, very *Eighties*), probably with our very own *style consultant*.

One fellow more than any other was responsible for the way we lived and breathed in the Eighties. But we couldn't get him to give us an interview, or anyone else for that matter, so we settled for Alfred Sherman (very *Alfred*, very *Sherman*), widely seen by *those in the know* (and the Eighties was all about *those in the know* — remember?) as a *fat and distinctly disagreeable* self-publicist who'd never turn down an opportunity to exaggerate his own importance to those gullible enough to go along with it.

Alfred Sherman: I invented Thatcherism. I single-handedly transformed the British economy. I was the First Man on the Moon. And I tell you this: I'll never forgive that Neil Armstrong for taking the credit.

Peter York: What does Spandau Ballet mean to you?

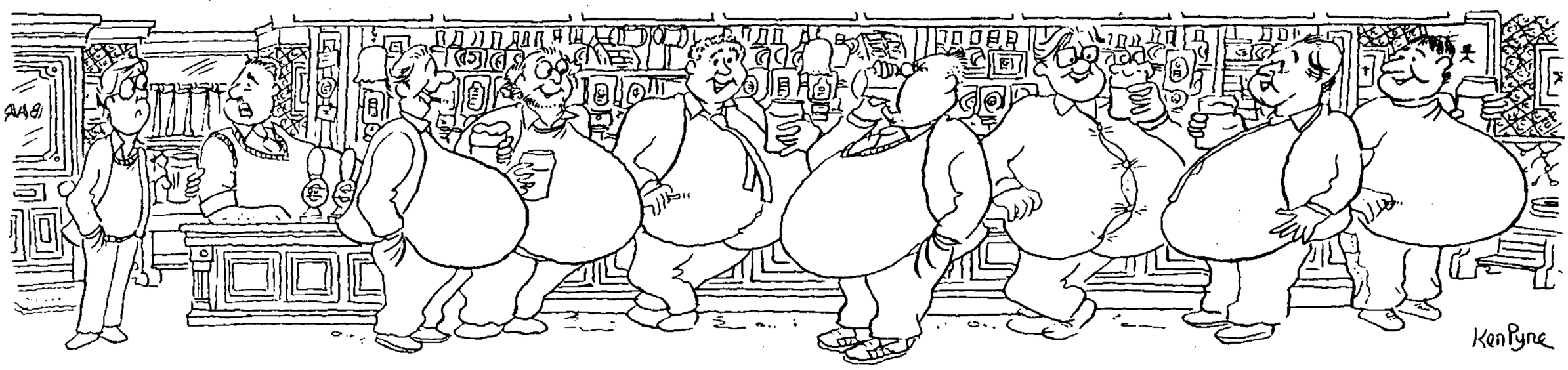
Alfred Sherman: Gary Kemp this, Gary Kemp that. But I was the one who wrote the songs, and they never even credited me with playing bass on their first three albums. But historians will see that the bass-line on those first three albums by the Spandaus was the prime influence on Margaret Thatcher when she came to send a Task Force to the Falklands.

Peter York: And finally, by the end of the Eighties, you had become disillusioned by the progress the Tories had made?

Alfred Sherman: I had given Margaret everything — the loan of my rooms at Number 10 Downing Street, complete freedom to follow my instructions and the prestige attached to an association with me. And how had she repaid me? Not a single mention of me in her autobiography. Not *one*! And to think that I had been the one who had pulled the strings to get her into the House of Lords...

There was an *awful* lot of shopping in the Eighties. When we went into shops, we'd often take out our money from our Armani wallets then buy something — *and take it away with us*. Food shopping in particular was *very* voguey. And *after* you had bought the food and taken it home — *you would sure as hell want to eat the stuff*. The world was divided into those who ate it by themselves and those who ate in the company of others, brought in to supplement their *lifestyle*. In many ways, food taught us how to *re-invent* ourselves. But it left us feeling confused. And a *teensy bit guilty*. This was the boil-in-the-bag, very *Next*, pre-Major culture of the post-Bowie era, with perhaps a dab of *Neighbours*, and what it said was this: "There's an awful lot of *stuff* around, and we've got a *momentum* going, so let's *run with it* and — fingers crossed — soon the stuff with the momentum will *thingy itself*!" So being someone who bought food from shops in the Eighties and then ate it *became one* of those terribly defining things. You lucky people!

The Eighties were, in the end, quintessentially and characteristically very, *very*, very *Eighties*. Without *them*, the Nineties would have followed straight on from the Seventies — and there would have been a *world without Spandau Ballet*. But if the Eighties taught us anything, they taught us that *a little goes a long way* and — let's never forget it, boys and girls — *italicisation sells*.



"You're new here, aren't you?"

Literary Review

The X-Cess Files

The X-Files™ Book of the Unexplained
Jane Goldman
(Simon & Schuster, £15.99)

The Unofficial X-Files Companion
N.E. Genge
(Macmillan paperback, £9.99)

The X-Files™ : Ground Zero
Kevin J. Anderson
(HarperCollins, £9.99)

The Truth is Out There™ : The Official Guide to the X-Files™
Brian Lowry
(HarperCollins paperback, £9.99)

HERE'S a joke. *The X-Files* presents itself as an alternative programme for cultists who mistrust government and big business. Its heroes Mulder (that's the man) and Scully (the redhead) battle to discover the truth about weird and paranormal phenomena which those in power want covered up.

As a result it has attracted one of the classic fan audiences, the X-Philes, who already rival the *Dr Who* dorks, the *Prisoner* bores, and the *Red Dwarf* twerps. Even the Trekkies and the Rocky Horrors are being outdone. The *X-Files* following has become so enormous the BBC has just transferred the series from BBC2 to BBC1 (Tuesdays at 10), a transition made only by a few specially favoured shows such as *Absolutely Fabulous*. Three of these four spin-off books are currently high in the best-seller lists.

Yet there is nothing alternative about *The X-Files* whatsoever. It's one of the slickest entertainment products coming out of America. And it belongs to none other than one Rupert Murdoch, via Twentieth Century Fox. That's why the "official" books have the trademark sign everywhere and are published by HarperCollins. The poor deluded "X-Philes" are just as much in Rupert's pocket as Sky-subscribers and *Sun*-readers.

Naturally enough the only book among these four which explains this is the one that isn't a bestseller. *The Official Guide to the X-Files* is a curious miscalculation. Written by the Los Angeles television editor of *Daily Variety*, a trade newspaper, it's full of respectful reporting of the amazingly good business the programme has done. Lowry talks knowingly of "Nielsen ratings" (a viewer measurement) and even prints tables and charts giving the American figures for every single episode. There are extracts from reviews and lists of prizes won (including one for "individual achievement in graphic design and title sequences") and the book ends with adverts for the next series on Sky, other related HarperCollins titles and a 20th Century Fox X-Files video.

For anybody in the television business, this "official guide" might make interesting reading. But for the fans it's everything they least want to hear about the commercial calculations that underpin *The X-Files*. Sensibly Lowry himself is evidently not interested in paranormal garbage in the least, except as a way of grabbing an audience. Feebly he tries to link these two themes: "If the creative essence of *The X-Files* can be distilled down to a search for truth in the face of dark forces seeking to conceal it, producing *The X-Files* involves a similar if somewhat less dramatic formula — namely, searching for quality against the tyranny imposed by the scheduler and pace of primetime television." Pooh! It's clear which search engages him more.

Carter himself takes a similarly robust line about his handling of spooks and monsters. "You can lay on the bullshit really thick if you lay on a good scientific foundation," he advises.

That, of course, is precisely what has been done in the three more successful titles. *Ground Zero* is a dreary novel about Mulder and Scully, which has been manufactured by a professional science-fiction writer at the behest of the copyright holders. The agents discover nothing less than "a vengeful collection of radioactive ghosts with superpowers", as the past victims of an atomic bomb unite in the spirit world to frustrate the development of an even more deadly bomb. The author's acknowledgements begin: "My sincere thanks go to the team of dedicated people at Fox Television..."

The *Unofficial X-Files Companion* adroitly capitalises on its inability to say the same. Making a virtue of a necessity, it boasts: "This book is TOTALLY UNOFFICIAL and completely covert. It has not been prepared, approved, licensed, endorsed, or in any way authorized by any entity that created or produced The X-Files." It's just what the fans want to hear, especially with its little play on "entity" when all it means is "corporation".

Inside the bullshit's impressively thick. There's a running "Trivia Buster" quiz — "What happened to Arthur Grable's brain after his death?" — and pages of laborious pseudo-scientific assertions about the paranormal. A multitude of alien races have been identified, we're assured. There are Gray ones, Reptilian ones, and Human-Type ones "who can walk unrecognized among us". Who hasn't seen Human Type A, for example? "Of normal height, with human features reminiscent of the Scandinavian region, they're also known as 'Blonds'." You can find them at Stringfellow's any day of the week.

More lavishly produced, *The X-Files Book of the Unexplained Volume One* is by Jonathan Ross's wife. It's no more than a bog-standard "strange but true" book of occult tosh which has been enterprisingly tagged to the X-Files. You get UFOs, ghosts and werewolves; you get spontaneous combustions, monkey men or "feral humans" and faith healers. You get interviews with the usual flakes — Timothy Good, the UFO promoter; Bob Rickard, the editor of *Fortean Times*; and so forth. You get lots of ludicrous pictures: a "magnetic woman" festooned with ironmongery; an "electrical man" powering a lightbulb; a human pincushion; an Indian with his head buried in the sand like an ostrich to show he can hibernate...

Mrs Woss has tried to keep her hands clean with havering phrases — "It has been suggested...", "it would appear...", Some would say..." It's a sad fact that anybody bright enough to turn out this kind of stuff is also bright enough to know better, unlike the saps who buy it. But never mind, dear. Close your eyes and think of the royalties. They at least must be really out of this world...

Books & Bookmen

☐ HEADTEACHERS are pouring over the new GCSE curricula which are about to be approved, but those whose schools are taking southern examining board exams are particularly puzzled.

The new English syllabus contained a book called *Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Verse* edited by Christopher Woodhead. They had never heard of the book, which was printed in 1984, and even its publisher, Oxford University Press, struggled to find references to the anthology.

If the book is approved on the syllabus it can expect a huge resurgence in popularity as English teachers provide one for each of their pupils. No doubt this will rake in money for its editor, Christopher Woodhead. If anyone wanted to protest about the choice of this little-known tome they could always complain to the chief inspector of schools, er, Christopher Woodhead.

MORE ARCHER FICTION

■ WHEN the *Sunday Telegraph* asked publishers to recommend the most exciting books of 1996, Stuart Proffitt of HarperCollins went into raptures over Jeffrey Archer's forthcoming epic, *The Fourth Estate*, a tale of two press barons based on Murdoch and Maxwell.

"It is his best book since *First Among Equals* and, surprisingly, his funniest," Proffitt drooled, modestly neglecting to add that he himself had been obliged to "rewrite" the Archer book.

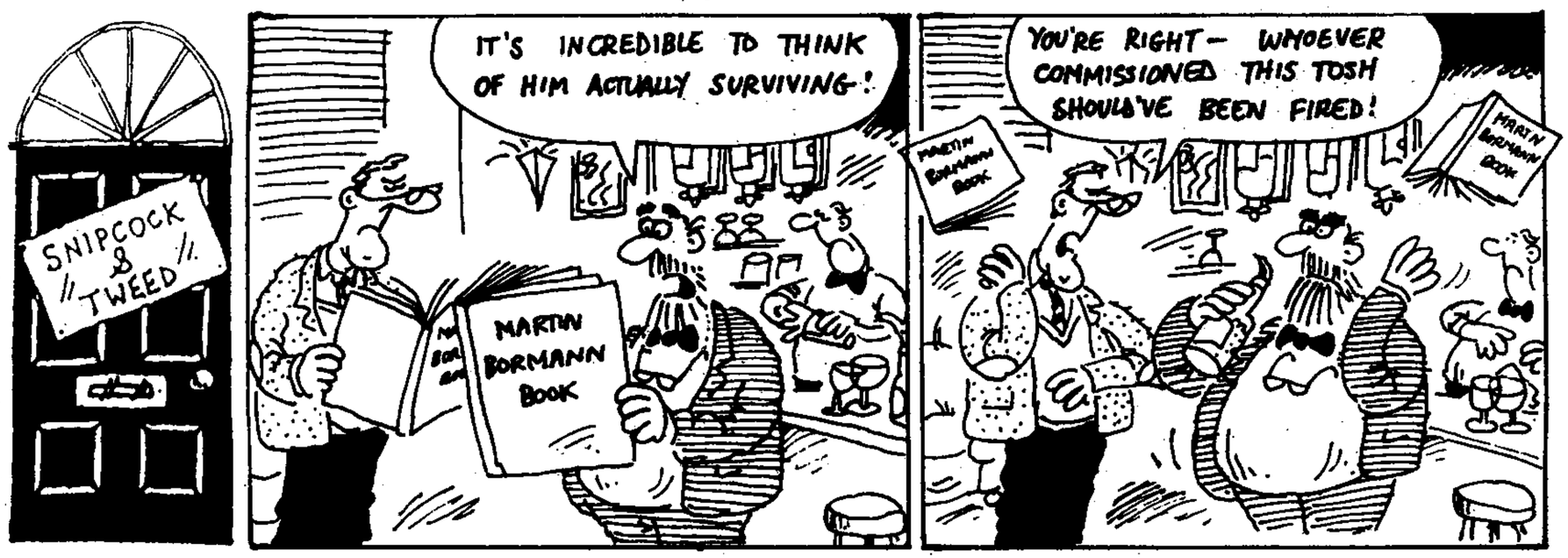
In spite of Proffitt's heroic rescue work, however, the novel is still as flat as an ice-rink. This is why Archer and his editor are increasingly desperate to get their hands on Tom Bower's new book about Cap'n Bob's final days, to be published shortly by HarperCollins, which is widely rumoured to include sensational revelations — material they would dearly like to incorporate in *The Fourth Estate*.

Six months ago, Archer tried the direct approach, ringing Bower and asking if he could read the manuscript. "I've spoken to your literary agent," the great story-teller added, "and he didn't think there would be any objections." Bower nevertheless refused — and later discovered that his agent, Mike Shaw of Curtis Brown, had no recollection of speaking to Archer.

By Christmas, Stuart Proffitt was complaining to colleagues that Archer's publication date would have to be put back to the summer since the novel was still unfit for public consumption. "I'm having a terrible time," he wailed. "My only hope of salvaging it is to get hold of some of the stories from Bower's book." When staff at the HarperCollins office had gone home for Christmas, he therefore began a frantic search of the building. Alas! Unbeknown to him Bower's MS had been locked away, and the only three proof copies had been taken to a secret address for the holiday season — as a safeguard against light-fingered rivals!

Never mind: Bower's book will probably appear this week, as soon as a verdict is reached in the Maxwell trial. Is there still time for Proffitt to plagiarise Bower's scoops and use them to pep up Archer's pisspoor yarn? Will they all live happily ever after? Watch this space...

'Bookworm'


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S INCREDIBLE TO THINK OF HIM ACTUALLY SURVIVING!
MARTIN BORMANN BOOK
YOU'RE RIGHT — WHOEVER COMMISSIONED THIS TOSH SHOULD'VE BEEN FIRED!
MARTIN BORMANN BOOK

In the City

SHAREHOLDERS in loss-making builders Y.J. Lovell will have little to celebrate at their annual meeting on 23 January. The company has reported a £33 million loss, and as its leaders keep reminding a government that remains deaf despite years of party donations, the construction industry is still deep in the grip of the feel bad factor.

One item any shareholder attending the meeting might wish to pursue is the total bill for sacking chief executive Robert Sellier, who departed in November a year ahead of schedule, and the perks he enjoyed while presiding over losses in three of the last four years.

Sellier celebrated 1994, the only profitable year he produced, by collecting total emoluments more than twice the dividend to ordinary shareholders — £809,000 against £399,000. For his final triumph, which took total losses under his rule bursting through £100 million, this figure was slashed to a more modest £595,000. The biggest slice of this generous reward for failure was a £229,000 contribution to his pension! Another £135,000 went to meet Sellier's tax liability for increased contributions.

But these were not the only perks enjoyed by the architect of Lovell's success. With board approval and an independent valuation, Sellier acquired a plot at Lovell's luxury development at Marbella on the Costa del Sol for £112,500 in December 1994. This is said to have proved a very well timed purchase as values have since risen. Sellier also regularly enjoyed company financed fishing and shooting rights designed for winning over important clients.

Sellier was forced out two months after the end of the 1994-95 financial year. His co-directors clearly felt he should take the fall for one giant loss too many. But it was a fairly comfortable landing – if somewhat expensive for the sorely tried Lovell shareholders whose shares have crashed from 61p to 14p.

Sellier had one year left on his contract which provided a basic salary of £215,000. He received £107,500 plus other benefits which comprised, until 31 May, the use of a Jaguar XJ6, the option to buy the M-reg car for £16,500, private medical and life insurance and a contribution towards his legal and accountancy fees for negotiating the severance agreement.

But as ever with older directors — Sellier is 62 — the big pay-off is in the pension. Lovell made a £216,500 contribution to top up his pension in addition to the slightly larger payment made for 1994-95. This will ensure that Sellier, who only joined Lovell in 1991, is already in receipt of a pension of £84,500 plus a suspected six-figure lump sum payment. Failure does indeed have its own reward!

Lovell shareholders — who went without a dividend at all this year, as they have done for three of the four years he was chief executive — might consider pressing for further details of both Sellier's pension and any other benefits he received while presiding over one of the construction industry's greatest recent flops.

But the expectation must be that as usual institutions such as M&G, Scottish Widows, Schroder and Legal & General will join the small shareholders in masterly imitations of sheep and having been duly shorn will remain dutifully silent.

GRANADA's Gerry Robinson may have taken on more than he bargained for in more ways than price when he mounted his unwelcome bid for Forte. A key player in the Forte defence team has been director David Owen, in charge of human resources. Before joining Forte Owen was possibly related to the David Owen who was a medium to senior ranking official in MI5. Thankfully Robinson has nothing to fear from Owen's old friends in the security service.

IF IT was not January it would seem a spectacular April Fool to suggest, as did the *Daily Mail* last week, that Italian-Canadian twin brothers Anthony and Robert Papalia are planning a listing for their Metals Research Corporation on the Alternative Investment Market in order to raise £25 million for a reputed gold prospect in British Columbia.

It was suggested that their company Metals Research was already quoted on the US NASDAQ market. This came as a surprise to NASDAQ, which suggested the lesser ranked "pink sheets" market of the National Quotations Bureau. It too, however, denied any knowledge.

The last time the Papalias surfaced in London with the same Port Douglas project it was 1977 and the whole episode ended in tears with the arrival of Scotland Yard's organised crime squad amid allegations of a Mafia linked international fraud.

The Papalias spent most of the next three years in custody awaiting trial or being tried — apart from the brief period that Anthony escaped from court. They and a fistful of Italians were charged with seeking to defraud investors of more than £160 million by selling shares in a BC gold mine that was said to be little more than a waterlogged shack. The prospectus for the original Metals Research SA was described in court as a "tissue of lies".

The first trial was stopped after 127 days in April 1979 when newspapers reported that the mastermind behind the plot, Pier Luigi Torri, who was closely linked to Italian Mafia figures, and who had escaped with Anthony Papalia, had been arrested in New York. The Papalias were acquitted at the retrial. Quite right for as Anthony Papalia declares now; "We were totally innocent."

Papalia made similar claims about a little matter of £25,000 and a 1975 arrest warrant in Vancouver after which he left for Nassau. He later claimed to have settled this by paying a small fine.

The Canadian authorities it seems were less than enthusiastic about having the Papalia-promoted gold project on any of their stock exchanges. This may or may not have been connected to suggestions — doubtless incorrect and malicious — that the brothers might be distantly related to leading Canadian Mafia figure Johnny Papalia.

But all of that is now well in the past so no doubt the stock exchange authorities will be only too ready to welcome the Papalias and Metals Research.

CHEATED creditors of Roger Levitt may have mixed feelings to learn that a slab *of the lucky* conman's own money sank with his International Boxing Corporation. IBC was set up and funded while Levitt was still bankrupt so he could not appear as a director or shareholder, merely an all-important consultant.

But his now estranged front man Mike Jacobs has admitted that at least part of the £345,000 that provided IBC's share capital came from pension funds controlled by Levitt in Israel. As IBC is effectively no more the Levitt funds are likely to end up joining a long list of creditors.

Meanwhile Levitt's former neighbour and surety Panos Eliades appears to be having the same problems with auditors at Panix Promotions that he had with his initial boxing venture Champion Enterprises which went into liquidation last year.

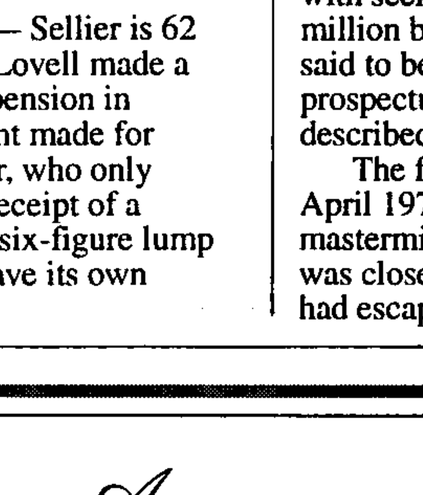
Panix recently filed its much delayed accounts for the year to February 1994. Though in abbreviated form (to protect prying rivals from knowing too much) the accounts revealed that Panix, which promotes heavyweight contender Lennox Lewis among others, made a net profit of £90,000 and had more than £400,000 in the bank.

However, the Panix auditors were unable to provide the usual "true and fair view" assurance due to a lack of confirmation of figures from third parties. All somewhat embarrassing as when not at ringside director/shareholder Panos Eliades is — yes, that's right — an accountant.

GUINNESS defendant Jack Lyons may have lost his appeal against conviction but he still retains the knighthood removed by the Queen — at least as far as his old friends at the London Symphony Orchestra are concerned. A programme for a recent LSO concert listed "Sir" Jack Lyons as an honorary member and listed several fulsome references to the patronage of the "Sir" Jack Lyons Charitable Trust. Obviously money can buy not only forgiveness but forgetfulness.

'Slicker'

A STAMP



The MALT

The MACALLAN. DRAWS SOFT, CRYSTAL CLEAR WATERS FROM NATURAL BORE HOLES FOR TRANSFORMATION INTO THE NECTAR THAT IS The MALT

footnotes

THE GANG OF THREE: Ian Lang, Malcolm Rifkind and Rt. Hon Michael Forsyth

NATIONAL WEALTH SERVICE

A HUGE sigh of relief went up in the Scottish office and in what remains of the Scottish Tory party when the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) decided to publish its report on the HCI hospital fiasco on 21 December — when MPs and lobby journalists were packing up for Christmas.

By this device ministers were shielded from a comprehensive and (considering the committee's Tory majority) devastating attack on the conduct of the Scottish office over the last 10 years. Three cabinet ministers also avoided calls for resignations which, not so long ago, would have been mandatory after such an abominable scandal.

The committee found no excuse for the government decision to finance a private hospital and luxury hotel for rich foreigners in the middle of a rundown industrial area on the outskirts of Glasgow. The hospital company went into receivership within a few months of opening in 1994: £8 million of public money went down the drain at once. Another £30 million was spent on the hospital, £10 million of which went on clearing the site which was riddled with asbestos and which still leaks toxic gas.

Despite a declining market for private health care in Europe; despite clear proof that the expected flood of patients from Italy and Greece was a mirage, and was anyway impossible under EU rules; despite the fact that the company, HCI, had no experience in running such a hospital; despite angry complaints from the Blood Transfusion Service, which feared that the new hospital would soak up precious blood required by the NHS; despite the fact that the Irish Development Association had turned HCI down because it couldn't get the information it wanted; despite all this, ministers still approved the project a few months after Mrs Thatcher's election victory in 1987.

Which ministers? The authorization was signed by the then secretary of state for Scotland Malcolm Rifkind. The minister of state for industry, responsible for "regional selective assistance" (government handouts to boardrooms) was Ian Lang. The newly-appointed parliamentary under-secretary for health was the arch-Thatcherite Michael Forsyth.

Rifkind, Lang and especially Forsyth are normally very hostile to taxpayers' handouts. But all three agreed at once that a spanking new private hospital catering for the aches and pains of millionaire emirs, sultans and sheikhs, plus a luxury hotel for their relatives, was a wonderful idea for Clydebank.

ARISE SIR DONALD: Professor Mackay

The normally tightfisted gentlemen who run the Scottish office and its development agency, Scottish Enterprise, opened their coffers to the speculators behind HCI and prepared to shower them with the people's money. On 12 April 1988 the proposal went to the Scottish industrial development advisory board, chaired by Sir Robert Smith, a prominent accountant.

Only six of the 15 board members made it to the meeting: Sir Robert; another accountant called Duncan Macleod, who had to leave the meeting because his firm was acting for the hospital company; Yaqub Ali, a cash-and-carry millionaire; John Little, a mining machinery manufacturer; and two trade unionists, David Paterson and Robert Thomson. During the two-hour discussion, the trade unionists scorned the proposal. Mr Paterson, who grew up in the area round the site, doubted whether many millionaires would be attracted by it. The two businessmen voted in favour; the two trades unionists against; and the project only struggled through on Sir Robert Smith's casting vote.

Robert Thomson resigned at the next meeting but ministers' enthusiasm never wavered. In July 1993 they were backed by a £7.9 million investment in the hospital by British Aerospace. Surely, they declared, an investment from such a prestigious company was a clear sign that the hospital would be a commercial success. Er, not at all. As the Commons committee reveals, the BAe investment was simply a sweetener to mollify important people in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi, etc, who might use the hospital and who regularly sign arms deals with British Aerospace.

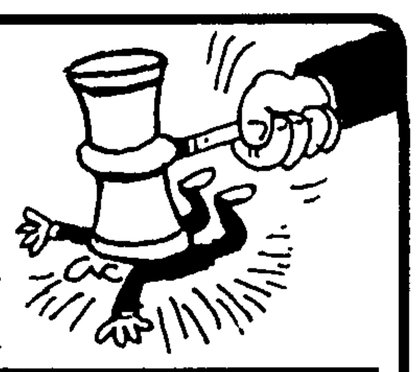
So how did Scottish Enterprise safeguard the public money which it squandered on the hospital? It appointed one of its own board members, John Laydon, to the HCI board. Mr Laydon attended one meeting at which he so impressed the HCI directors they asked him to join the firm as director of international marketing. Laydon agreed at once — as did Scottish Enterprise, which duly "seconded" Mr Laydon to the board of HCI, where he spent many happy months masterminding the marketing disaster which led to the firm's collapse.

The company was rescued by rich investors from Abu Dhabi, and the hospital staggers on with only a tiny percentage of the patients forecast, many of them referrals from the National Health Service — specifically excluded from the original hospital plans. So shocked are Scottish office chiefs by their white elephant that they plan to lavish another £4.4 million of public money on it.

None of the politicians responsible for the debacle gave evidence to the PAC. But they and their advisers have all been punished, as follows: Malcolm Rifkind is now foreign secretary; Ian Lang is now secretary of state for trade and industry; Michael Forsyth is now secretary of state for Scotland.

John Laydon is back working for Scottish Enterprise and Professor Donald Mackay, chairman of Scottish Enterprise, got a knighthood in the new year's honours.

Beaks of the Week



JPs: Mr Christopher Cheshire, Ms Edna Flyn and Mr David Bradbury

■ ON 16 September 1993, Stoke magistrates Christopher Cheshire, Edna Flyn and David Bradbury had a field day. They sent 12 people to prison for poll tax arrears. The sentences ranged from 14 to 90 days.

Barbara Booth, a housewife entirely dependent on her husband's £120-a-week income, got 90 days for not paying £20 poll tax arrears which she said she had paid. Fred Sellers, who is so disabled the magistrates had to convene a special court in a downstairs room, could not be in court because he was in hospital. He had fallen £35 behind in paying off his poll tax arrears because someone had stolen his benefit book. In his absence, the magistrates sent him and his wife Nichola down for 14 days. Neither Barbara nor Fred nor Nichola got to prison. An observer at the court advised them to contact Stoke lawyer Richard Wise. In a trice their prison warrants were frozen by the high court.

Both cases have been back to the high court for judicial review. Mr Justice Harrison on the Sellers case, and Mr Justice Owen in the Booth case, strongly criticised the magistrates for cavalier flouting of the law they are meant to enforce. Costs were awarded against the magistrates in the Booth case, but they are still arguing about paying them.

So far five of the 12 people jailed on that one September day in 1993 have had their prison sentences quashed.

LUCKY DIB

IF YOU want to understand home secretary Michael Howard's asylum bill, study the amazing case of the young Algerian policeman, Hocine Dib.

Mr Dib fled to Britain in 1993 after his girlfriend and his closest police colleague were killed by anti-government gunmen. He came into the country on a tourist visa, and soon afterwards applied for political asylum. This was refused, but he was given leave to appeal. In 1994 he married a British primary school teacher, and applied to stay here because he was married to a British citizen. The marriage was subjected to the usual tough home office investigation — and declared genuine.

On 28 November Mr Dib was arrested at the restaurant where he was working. He was told he was an illegal immigrant because he had not applied for asylum when he came into the country. His marriage and the danger to him in Algeria, he was told, were irrelevant. He was hauled off to prison pending deportation to Algeria.

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS: Hocine and Patti Dib

Three times he was taken to Heathrow for deportation — and each time rescued at the last moment. On 5 December, Tony Benn MP was rung up at midnight by friends of Mr Dib's wife. He rang the police at Southall, near Heathrow, and got the early morning deportation postponed. ("This shows there's still some point in being an MP," Benn wrote in his diary). In the days that followed, Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone and Emma Nicholson all wrote to the home office pointing out that Hocine faced certain persecution and probable murder if he were deported. The letters worked. On 21 December he won the right to take his case for judicial review, and on the 22nd was let out of prison to spend Christmas with his wife. Judicial review follows soon.

Clause one of the new asylum bill provides for a "fast track" appeals procedure for asylum seekers whom the home office thinks are "bogus". A home office spokeswoman said she could not be sure whether Hocine Dib's case would have been "fast-tracked" under the proposed new rules. But his lawyer, Eman Omar, is quite sure. "They made it clear from the beginning that they weren't interested in the strength of Hocine's case — they said he hadn't applied for asylum at the outset, and that was all that mattered. He would have been an obvious case for the fast track. He would have been bundled out of the country in less than a week, and would probably be dead by now."

HOWE MUCH MORE?

■ TWO BIG City solicitors' firms, Allen & Overy and Herbert Smith, are raking in taxpayers' money over the Scott inquiry. Their fees for clients who were witnesses at the hearings are likely to be more than half a million pounds — all paid by the taxpayer.

Allen & Overy acts for the two most anxious and prolific witnesses: Lord Howe and William Waldegrave. Herbert Smith acts for Lord Trefgarne, the former junior minister at defence and the DTI.

All three have made full use of the assurance when the Scott inquiry was set up that "the legal costs of government witnesses, including ministers or ex-ministers" will be met by the government. There is no provision for pruning the costs and no limit placed on them. Naturally Trefgarne, Howe and Waldegrave sought the best advice: partners at Allen & Overy and Herbert Smith are unlikely to charge less than £400 an hour.

In the Commons last June the prime minister told Labour MP Derek Fatchett that the total legal costs of all Scott's witnesses was £568,000. This figure has risen steeply as the correspondence, especially from Lord Howe, has intensified. The bulk of the legal expenses has been incurred on behalf of the three politicians... and there's more to come.

An Unbelievable Tory: 2

■ JONATHAN AITKEN's long campaign — armed with the shining sword of truth and the trusty shield of British fair play — to clear his name from the slur that his arms company BMARC broke his government's arms embargo has run into more difficulty.

On BBC's *Question Time* last summer, David Dimbleby asked him: "Was it not naive to sit there at BMARC board meetings with contracts sending hosts of guns to Singapore and assume that Singapore — which was at war with nobody and has a small navy — was going to use them, and not that they were going to go on somewhere else?"

Aitken replied: "I don't think it is quite right to say that the Singapore navy, which we were told was the purchaser of these guns and equipment, could not have had them. I think they had plenty of patrol boats which could have taken this equipment. That certainly was what I was told."

Terrible damage to this answer has now been inflicted by one of Mr Aitken's former colleagues on the BMARC board. On 13 December Mr Bill "McZero" McNaught, former BMARC managing director, gave evidence to the Commons trade and industry select committee investigating the BMARC affair. He was asked by the committee chairman if anyone at BMARC had realised that Singapore had no internal need for so many guns. He replied: "There was never any question about that. We assumed that Singapore were selling them on."

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When Aitken himself gives evidence to the committee, probably in February, he may be asked to explain the discrepancy between his assurance to millions on television that he was told the guns were needed by Singapore, and the assurance of his former managing director that the guns were *not* needed by Singapore.

But there is no guarantee the committee will put the boot in. It seems to be making an even bigger hash of its hearings than its notorious predecessor into supergun in 1991 and 1992.

Three Tory members of that committee survive on this one: Sir Anthony Grant; Dr Keith Hampson; and Barry "Pompous Portly" Porter. They continue to scoff at witnesses and leap to the defence of the government's arms policies as though the Scott inquiry had never happened. Porter has already been obliged to apologise publicly for a reckless and entirely false smear against the former chairman of BMARC's parent company, Gerald James.

The committee has plunged into its hearings without insisting on the crucial intelligence documents which would prove one way or another where the BMARC guns ended up; without ensuring that the relevant officials from the DTI give evidence; and without a guarantee that HM customs will disclose details of its investigations into BMARC. Last time it was Warren's whitewash (after the chairman Kenneth Warren MP, now Sir Kenneth). This time it looks like O'Neill's Cover-Up, after the current chairman, Martin O'Neill MP (soon to be Sir Martin).

Honours uneven

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One of her most belligerent adversaries has been the asbestos firm Turner and Newall. As the *Eye* reported in November, T&N, as it is now known, fought and lost a long and mendacious legal case against a Leeds woman dying of mesothelioma. Mrs Tait's delight at her honour turned to despair when she heard that the same honours list had conferred a knighthood on one Colin Hope. Sir Colin is chairman of T&N, which gave £75,000 to the Tory party in the 1990s.

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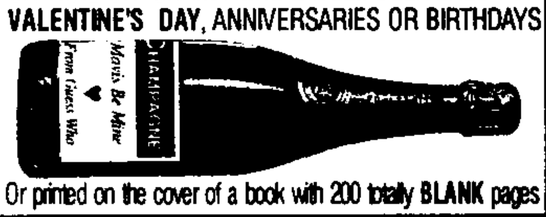

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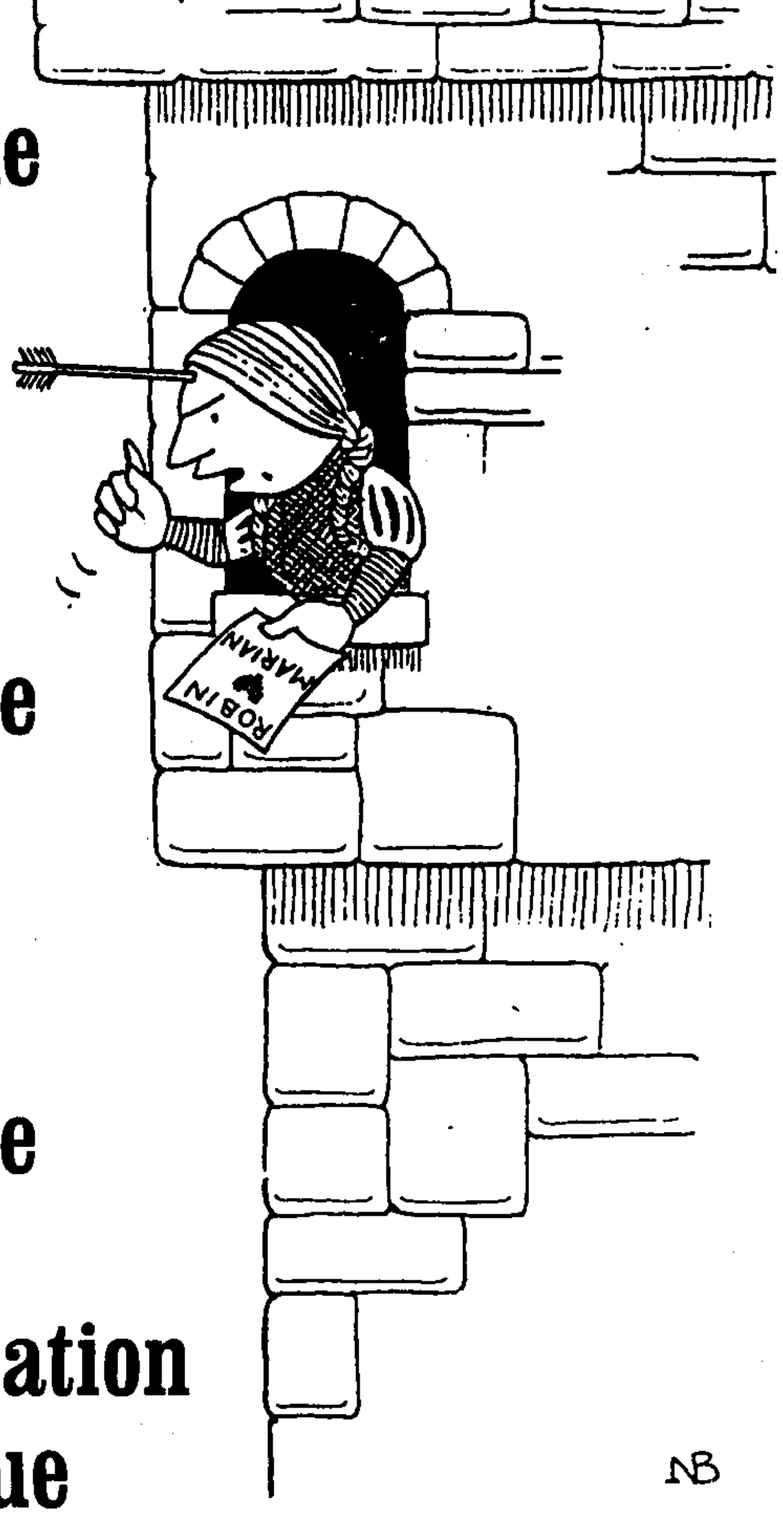

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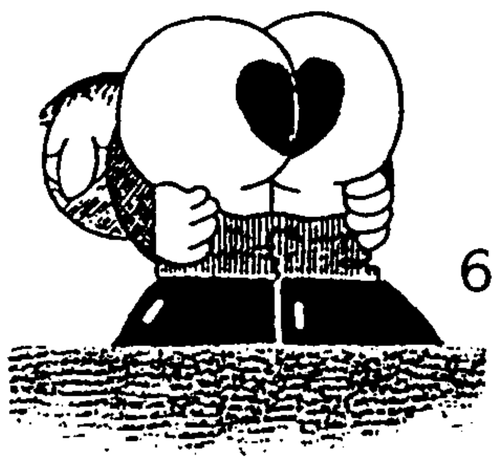

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POSTGRAD. NICOLE struggling au Pays de Galles needs coal, logs, hampers, warm pyjamas, mac and wellies, or perhaps, a "Renault Clio"? Box 3989.

VICTIM OF BRITISH judicial system needs £5,000 to prevent bankruptcy. Can you help? Box 0189.

AUTISTIC CHILD NEEDS legal finance to fight Tory education policy. Box 0289.

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DESPERATE MEDICAL student seeks air fare to Tanzania for elective in medical mission. Please help. Box 1889.

DESPERATELY NEED £7,503. Genuine, anything appreciated. Box 1989.

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TALENTED YOUNG AUTHOR desperately needs £3,000 to fund prodigious debut novel. Please help. Box 3689.

£2,000 DESPERATELY needed. Could 200 fellow Eye readers spare £10? Thank you. Box 4289.

CARING & SENSITIVE female, 30, desperately needs financial help and support to end/avoid acrimonious divorce proceedings. Box 4489.

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YOUNG PROFESSIONAL MAN, working, seeking single loan/donation of £5,000 to re-establish credit and get back on his feet. Unable to raise funds through conventional sources. Will repay in cash or kind as required. Able to supply professional and personal references. Box 5089.

INDIAN LADY, 30, needs financial help/support. Box 3486.

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CELTIC PRINCESS, early 30s, banished to Bournemouth by wicked employer, seeks handsome prince with trusty steed, or ugly commoner with rusty bicycle, to carry her off into the sunset. Forklift truck provided. ALA. Box 0589.

POINTS FAILURE: London Bridge — Man with the case seeks the witty lady with glasses, a bronica and 30 children! Call me presumptuous, but let's meet again? Box 0689.

PASSIONATE, WITTY, Welsh wag (34) seeks lady for usual pursuits (Cardiff/Bristol). Box 3585.

FANCY ATTENDING adult parties, but partner uninterested. Attached male (42, London/SE) WLTM attractive lady for discreet adventure. Life should be fun, live it now. Box 0887.

MALE, 49, City professional, over 6 feet, slim, fit, non-smoker, attached. Interested in travel, painting, cinema and eating out seeks attached female 35-55 for sincere friendship. Discretion assured. London area. Box 1787.

MISTER MAGOO seeks myopic female to steam up his spectacles. Box 0488.

DANTE STUCK IN purgatory seeks Beatrice to lead him to paradise. 30 year old, n/s, sincere, reliable male with vgsoh, many interests, and no hang-ups awaits your reply. ALA, London, Oxford, Berks. Box 1488.

TALL, DARK, SLIM male, 29, Bucks, many interests include travel, French, cinema, clubs, music, culture, languages, seeks slim, attractive female, preferably foreign, for lots of fun. Box 1489.

MALE, 25, Turkish English teacher seeks woman. Box 1589.

MALE, 43, English teacher abroad seeks woman similar age/situation. Box 1689.

EDUCATED, INDEPENDENT lady, 40, slim blonde wltm successful generous n/s (married?) professional man for occasional friendship and fun. S. East. Box 1789.

VERY NICE CHAP seeks very nice girl for very naughty correspondence. Box 2089.

HIS OTHER WOMAN'S man; 42 blonde slim drinker smoker reader. Discrete London meetings suggested. Box 2189.

MARRIED MAN, 58, wltm lady 35-55 for lunches, laughs, friendship and fun. London/South East. Box 2289.

ALAN PARTRIDGE sought by Mary Shuttleworth. Box 2389.

BLOKE, TWENTIES, tall, professional, Bristol area, seeks bird. Box 2489.

FEMALE, 24, smoker, told attractive, gsoh, slightly mad, seeks similar male. ALAWP. London. Box 2589.

MALE GRADUATE, 26, 5'11", seeks female. London/Cambridge/Anywhere. Box 2689.

ELIGIBLE CHESHIRE male, 40, seeks eligible female. Box 2188.

PLEASANT MALE, attached, 40s, solvent, seeks woman (18-35). Wining, usual wickedness. Photo? Box 0389.

PASSIONATE, PROFESSIONAL upmarket, single male, 39, very inexperienced but hunky & uninhibited, hedonistic, humorous, bohemian, creative, energetic and athletic. Seeks very long-haired, busty, non-smoking, unattached lady to teach him lessons in sensual loving. Photo please. Box 0789.

WANTED — unattached prince charming (28-40 years) to take Cinderella (35 years) to a ball. Must be tall and drop dead gorgeous. Photo essential. Box 0889.

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WARM SUN, snowcapped mountains, blue seas, good food, attractive man, 1½ hours from London, await beautiful English girl (25ish to 35ish) for transatlantic relationship. Photo please. Box 1089.

ATTRACTIVE, FUNNY, charming, 42, single male, prof, needs good relationship with attractive female, 25-37, London. Photo. Box 1189.

MALE, 24, attractive, intelligent, witty and sincere, seeks bright, friendly female for laughs and romance. Box 1289.

MALE, 54, solvent, smoker, seeks buxom lady in figure hugging clothes as girlfriend or housewife. Photo appreciated. Box 1389.

UNATTACHED LONDON professional man (43) seeks warm uninhibited sensual woman for uncomplicated relationship. Phone 0181 444 8950.

MALE, 29, GSOH, tall, intelligent, articulate, eclectic, would be delighted to have dinner with characterful, low-maintenance female (attractive with a good personality), Leeds. Box 1888.

FEMALE PROFESSIONAL, 32, 5'10", attractive. Likes outdoors, sports, good books, good company. WLTM similar male. Box 2789.

FASHIONABLE, FIT male, unattached, 42, seeks dangerous liaison with lithe married lady for an interesting 1996. Norfolk, Suffolk area preferred. Box 2889.

PENELOPE, 40, seeks Odysseus for sincere, funloving relationship and moonlit boatrides through central London. Box 3189.

YONI WORSHIPPER (virile male, 40s) seeks inspired kind deity to adore. Hants/Surrey/Berks. Box 3289.

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OPTIMISTIC MARRIED CHAP (36), seeks cheerful lady with big tits, for the usual impossibly complicated relationship! London. Box 4089.

PROFESSIONAL MAN, young sixties, seeks randy relationship with lady 40-60. I am Oxbridge educated, successful with very wide interests. You are educated and unconventional. We are uninhibited passionate and discreet. You are married? So am I! Preferably London, but anywhere nearby. Box 4189.

PRETTY, CANADIAN WOMAN, 28, seeks tall, humorous, professional male to share friendship, travel, socialising, and to show me around London! (London/South East.) Box 4389.

INTELLIGENT, WISE, experienced of the real life. Independent, reasonable, caring, affectionate. Up to 49 young, looking energetically to optimistic 1996 to share precious time with continental, international orientated, semi-detached but spacious thinking man. London and suburbs advantageous. Precise interpretation of above will assist. Box 0688.

FANCY ATTENDING adult parties, but partner uninterested. Attached male (42, London/SE) WLTM attractive lady for discreet adventure. Life should be fun, live it now. Box 0887.

NICE LOOKING, WITTY, solvent, fit 5'11" West London male (39) seeks attractive female, more broody than career crazed (!), kind, sincere but fun, 30-40, for lasting relationship — yeah, honestly! Photo appreciated. Box 3389.

IN PRAISE OF older women. Slim, boyish, generous man, 36, seeks elegant, sensuous, slim woman, 37-55, under 5'7", for discreet, passionate liaison. Photo please. Box 3489.

INTELLIGENT, ATTRACTIVE Scots lass seeks similar male (25-30) for fun, frolics and romance. Box 3589.

SCATTY PISCEAN LASS, 30, seeks witty romantic capable of being beaten at scrabble. Box 4589.

GOOD-LOOKING, youthful, 39 year old West Country based executive seeks lady for romance and long-term relationship. I am affectionate, kind, sincere and solvent with gsoh. If you are an attractive, long-legged, glamorous blonde, 20 years to 35 years, who is genuine and loving with a gsoh, please write with photo. ALA. Box 4889.

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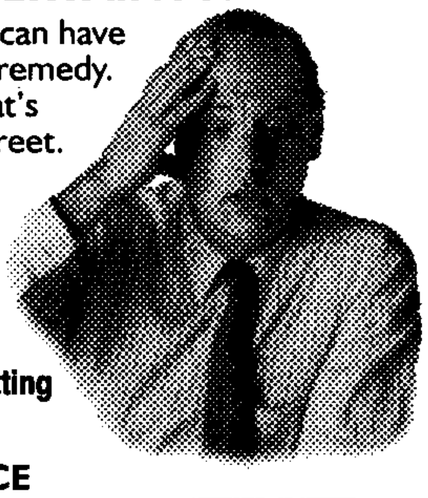

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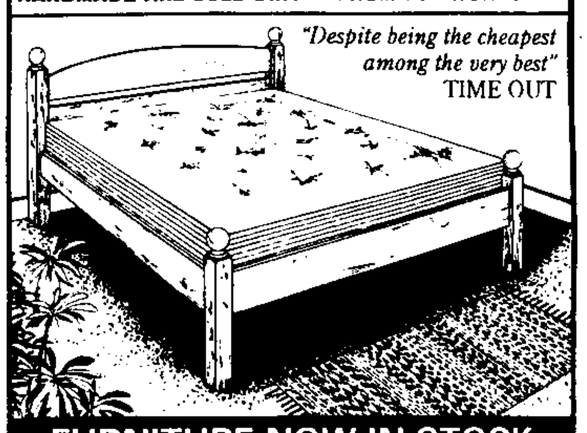

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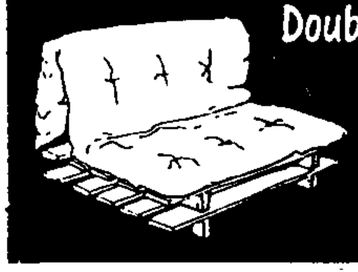

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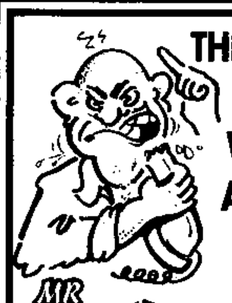

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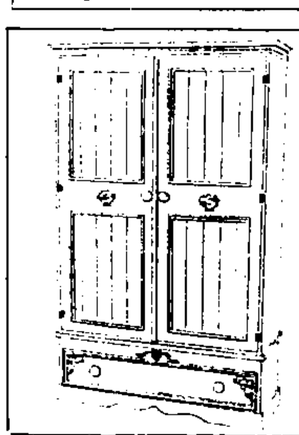

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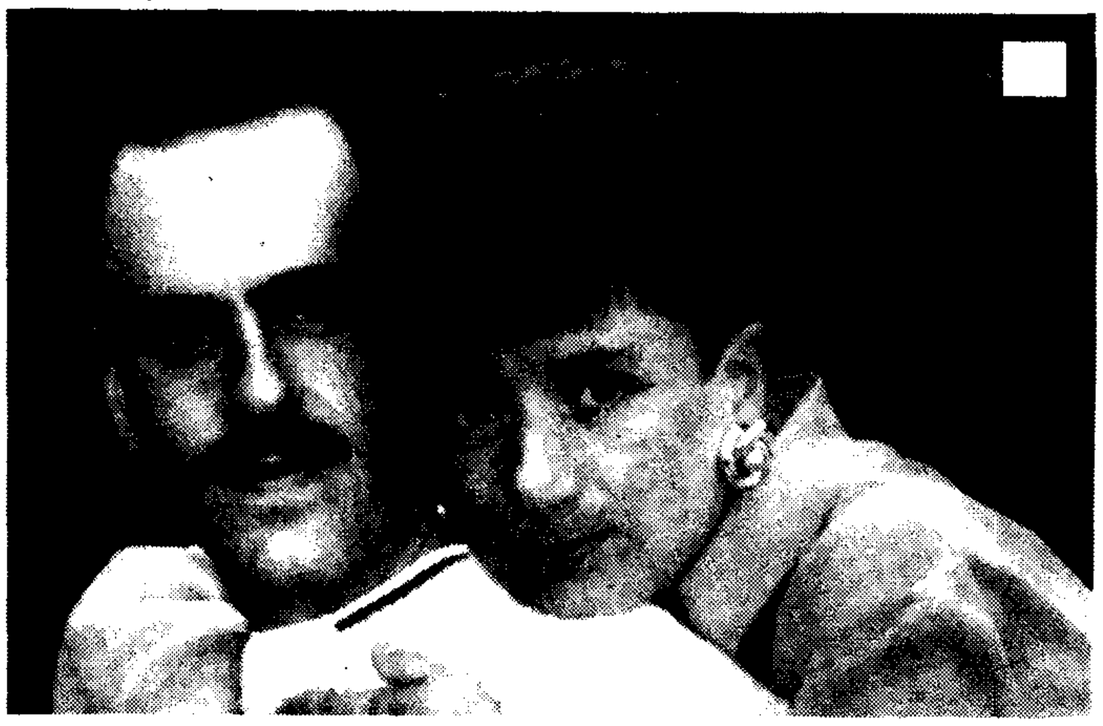

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2. Personal Information

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Religion: _____

Age:_____

Place of Birth: _____

Do you have children of your own?

Yes ❒ No ❒

If yes, how many live with you?_____

3. Your personal details

Height:_____

Build: slight ❒ medium ❒ large ❒

Hair colour: _____

Dress/Looks: casual ❒ fashionable ❒ elegant ❒ sporty ❒

4. Your work

Present job: _____

Self-employed ❒ employed ❒

civil servant ❒ manual worker ❒

part-time ❒ not working ❒

unemployed ❒ in-training ❒

Schooling

O levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒

Further Education ❒ Polytechnic ❒

University ❒ Business School ❒

Other: _____

5. Your Personality

❒ Warmhearted	❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious	❒ Practical
❒ Considerate	❒ Conventional
❒ Shy	❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic	❒ Adventurous

6. How would people who know you best describe you?

❒ always ready for a joke
❒ somewhat dreamy
❒ never has problems
❒ takes life a bit too seriously
❒ not easily upset
❒ always active
❒ chatty

7. Your interests

❒ Wining/Dining	❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs	❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit	❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History	❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading	❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling	❒ Drinking
❒ Science/Tech	❒ Children
❒ Cinema	❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals	❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music	❒ Countryside

8. Details of the partner you would like:

Minimum age:___ Maximum age: _____

Height: min._____ max.____ Don't mind ❒

Children?

Yes, at home ❒ Yes, living elsewhere ❒

None ❒

Marital status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒

Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Don't mind ❒

9. Which of the three pictures do you prefer? (tick the box)

Dept. PE47

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